THE WAYS OF THE HEART

"Alas! by some degree of woe
We every bliss must gain;
The heart can ne'er a transport know,
That never feels a pain."

—*Lord Lyttelton*

Black Beauty continued to paw the earth with one hoof and bend his head over Edith.

[See Page 177

THE WAYS OF THE HEART

By

ETHEL PENMAN HOPE

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THE WAYS OF THE HEART

CHAPTER I.

HAPPY DAYS.

"Oh, here we are!"

Two children jumped from the weather-beaten, time-worn carriage that had conveyed them from their home, the home they had known but for a few short years. In a few weeks they would be with their mother in the city. Their father had died a few years before, and the mother, a delicate little woman, had gone to the seashore for her health and had taken up house in an ideal villa overlooking the pretty harbor which led out into the deep, crystal sea. She seemed to be getting much better and stronger, and the children enjoyed every minute of their existence. They seemed almost to live on the water, bathing, fishing, sailing. The girl, Edith, was the picture of health, with soft brown eyes and cheeks like rosy apples in August. Her features were regular, and she had the daintiest little mouth, turning up at the corners. Her mother, Mrs. Grey, often called her "Sunshine," for she was

in very truth a "ray of sunshine." She had just passed her fourteenth birthday, and proud she was of it, for would she not soon be a woman, like her sweet, gentle mother whom she adored.

The lad, a sturdy youth of sixteen summers, was the embodiment of physical strength. He boasted of his muscle, and it was not vain boasting, for could he not swim against the swift current in the harbor, and as for wrestling at school, there was not a youth who dared brag of how he could trim Ronald Grey when Ronald was anywhere within hearing. If he did he would live to regret it, and the time of waiting would not be long. The clear blue eyes of the lad, with their look of honesty and courage and the sparkle of merriment and fun that fairly danced in them when anything worthy of a laugh occurred, made the stranger know at once that Ronald was not lacking in humor. His forehead was broad and his finely-shaped head sat well upon his manly shoulders. An interested observer might notice the little weakness about the mouth, but still his was a fine face, and Ronald was a good youth, one that all the girls "took to" exceedingly well. Indeed, there was not a maiden of all the farmers' daughters in that part who did not know of Ronald Grey, for he was always at both services at the kirk on the hill. He

would escort his mother and sister to the meeting place, where the minister, an earnest young man, conducted the service, and one could see that underneath the free-hearted manner there was a more serious side to his nature.

Mrs. Grey wound herself into the affections of all the humble folks in the little village and the country people around by her kind sympathy and generous giving to any worthy cause. When she first took possession of the little house on the hillside her heart was nearly broken. She must have had an easy life and a very happy one, for the traces of hard times or worry were not marked on her brow; there was an expression of quiet patience and unselfishness. Some years previous she had lost three beautiful children, and the loss had meant much to her. Just before coming to the peaceful little seaside village Mrs. Grey had gone through the most trying experience of her life in the sudden death of her husband. The wound that leaves the heart sore and saddened takes many long days to heal.

The neighbors knew little or nothing about the late Mr. John Grey's life, for Mrs. Grey was exceedingly reticent and the children gave no information to satisfy the curious; but one thing seemed sure, that Mr. Grey had been a barrister by profession and had left

his wife and family in very comfortable circumstances, whatever his faults or virtues may have been. Mrs. Grey had become so deeply attached to her quiet home that to leave it was like parting with an old friend. She had grown to like the people, for although they were humble farmers, except the few village folk, they had honest hearts and showed no end of kindness to the widow and her children.

Mrs. Grey had gone that morning to stay with her mother until she could find a suitable house for herself and the children. Edith and Ronald were to stay with a kind neighbor, William McCullugh and his wife, until Mrs. Grey would send for them, which the children hoped would not be for some time.

To Edith and Ronald the thought of going to the city in order that their education might be improved and leaving all their friends and the grand, beautiful ocean they loved, presented no picture of bliss. Their mother felt that to keep them away from the better opportunities the city presented in the way of education was indeed not fair to the children. True, Ronald had been in the High School in Pictou for the last year, but it necessitated his being away all week, for he could only get home on Friday nights, so moving to the city seemed to Mrs. Grey to be an absolute neces-

city. Montreal was the city she chose, for although it was quite a distance from her quiet little home on the Nova Scotia shore, it was the city where her mother lived, and for that reason she chose it. The longing for the companionship of some of her own kin was uppermost in her thoughts for herself, and Montreal she knew to be a city well provided with educational advantages for her boy and girl.

As Edith jumped from the high-seated gig Charlie McCullugh offered his assistance, but with a toss of her head she quickly eluded his offer and sprang into the midst of the group at the door awaiting her arrival.

"Dear Mrs. McCullugh," she exclaimed, "how lovely of you to ask us to stay with you. Hurrah! won't we have fun. I am just in time to help the girls bring the cows from the pasture," turning with a bright smile to the daughters of the house.

Mrs. McCullugh looked down upon the sweet face full of merriment.

"Yes, dearie," she said, "we are very pleased to have you and Ronald stay with us, and the longer the better, for I think we will sorely miss your sunny smile when you leave us."

Edith threw her arms around the dear lady's neck, and the next moment was run-

ning down the lane with the daughters of the house, one on either side of her: Winnie, a gentle girl of eighteen, and Flossie, a little mischief of twelve years.

"How perfectly splendid that you are here," Winnie was saying, "and now we can all go together to the concert to-night in the school-house."

"Winnie, my honey bunch," Edith said, "I have thought of nothing for the last week but of the concert to-night. How dreadful if mother had taken us away before it came off!"

"Oh, yes," Flossie chirped in, "I suppose you want to catch a last glimpse of that Willie Johnson you were always kissing at school."

"You little minx, wait until I get you in the pasture, where no one is looking, and won't I give you a jolly good shaking for saying such things."

And while Edith was in this gay mood, she slipped one of her feet between Flossie's and down Flossie sat, hard on the grass. Edith and Winnie were good runners, but Flossie soon caught up with them, and then the laughter that made the old woods ring would cheer the heart of anyone.

Roy Johnson was the terror of the school and the worst little dare devil in the township.

On Hallowe'en night was it not Roy Johnson who was the leader of the boys who took off old Peter McNabb's barn door and let out all the cattle, which proved no laughing matter for poor Peter, for it cost the old man many a hunt up creek and down dale to recover his missing treasures.

Flossie was a born tease, for well she knew that Edith always slapped Roy's saucy face whenever he bothered her.

During this time Ronald was busy with Charlie in the barn, hurrying to get the work done before the supper bell would ring. Charles McCullugh was a young man who had crossed the "two dozen line," as Ronald always said about the twenty-six years that had passed over his manly head. He had always lived on the farm, except during the four years he had spent in the High School at Picton, and thankful he had been for that opportunity of improving himself, but the desire to know more and to make the best of his life seemed at times to quite overcome him, especially when he was fortunate enough to get some book on science or music, for these were the two things that his soul loved and longed for. At school he had been the science star, and the teachers felt that when Charlie returned to the farm it was as if a bright future had

been darkened, for they knew that he had talent above the average. But ever as time wore on, and the vision of the future seemed no nearer his grasp, he made up his mind that no hint of the longing in his heart must be guessed by his parents to cause them worry. His mother was an English lady who ran away from her strict old grandmother to cast in her lot with handsome William McCullugh, the son of rich but common parents, who, being greatly enraged at what they considered a most unfortunate alliance for their son, cut him off from every cent of his inheritance, so the two young people had to start out in life to make a living. She, a lady with such dainty hands and sweet, gentle face, and he the very opposite to her in everything, except his big, generous heart and cheerful manner. His was a nature full of sympathy, for if anyone was sick or in trouble in the neighborhood William McCullugh was the first to do some deed of kindness. He certainly had no business head. He had borrowed money to buy thoroughbred stock, but they had all sickened and died, and the poor man was left with a growing family to support, a debt to pay, and a livelihood to make. The farm not being the best in the country, it took both him and Charlie all their time to make ends meet. Many, many times had Charlie sat long into

the night listening to the cry of the whip-poor will as it winged its flight far up from the ploughed ground and the hay fields away up under God's great starry sky, and his heart and soul would be full of longing for a time to come when he could get out into the world of men—men whose influence was a mighty power, men of knowledge, men whose ideas had been broadened by contact with the world; but God puts some mighty souls in humble places, and some small souls in the mighty seats. Oftentimes the soul is hindered in its growth because of the mighty seat, and the humble places do not retard the growth in the same way, but the soul, out of the narrow surroundings, looks up, and behold, God is very near!

Charlie was slowly learning that to do his duty uncomplainingly is the noblest work a man can do, for, after all, our life and surroundings are much as we ourselves make them. We can see the highest possibilities even in the most monotonous work, and wonderous beauties lie clustering around the most tedious task if the soul is mighty enough to see them. So life went on for Charlie. His violin was his best friend—to it he confided his longings and ambitions, and sometimes when he was alone and ran his fingers over the strings the way that violin would give his

secrets away and lay bare his heart should surely have made him more reserved in the future; but not so, for when Charlie lost himself in his violin his whole heart and soul were moving in an altogether different sphere.

His mother, with the quick mother instinct, knew that Charlie was not fashioned for a farmer, and often she lay awake at night planning how to make a little extra to put by. Perhaps she could board the new railway men, she would see; but with it all, never complaining. She was a firm believer in God and felt that things would turn out well some day, perhaps not in the way she wished, but the way that Providence ordained she prayed might be the only way she would desire.

Such was the life and such were the people with whom Edith and Ronald were destined to make their home for a few weeks.

CHAPTER II.

SIMPLE SONGS.

We could not say that Charlie was handsome, for he was not, but to say that he was homely would be just as misleading. His face was a fine, strong, manly one, and showed character in every line, but his eyes were the chief beauty. They were as blue as the sea, and as true as they were blue.

"Are you to play your violin to-night, Charlie?" Ronald was asking. He was eager to know, for if so there was a treat in store.

"Oh, I guess so, youngster, but I do despise playing when the kids won't and don't keep quiet. I believe Sam Young has a scheme on to-night to try and keep better order. I hope it works. Suppose Edith is to sing her little ditty, eh?" This Charlie said in such a careless tone that no one would guess that any feeling prompted the question.

"I guess so, she never seems to get tired of singing, if the people can stand it; that's my worry."

"See here, youngster, wait till you get something to worry about before you start that sort of thing," Charlie replied, "but

listen, there is the gong, so come along in to supper."

When the evening meal was over and Flossie and Ronald had had a tussle, Flossie teasing and Ronald trying in vain to christen her golden locks with a glass of water, they all got ready for the great event—the concert in the school-house.

Charlie brought the double-seated rig to the door.

"Don't forget your song," he called to Edith.

"No, indeed, and I won't forget your violin, although you would have forgotten it purposely, you naughty boy," Edith replied as she jumped in beside him.

Mrs. McCullugh did not go; she would rather stay at home and rest, she said, but if you could peep in at the window the resting would mean making over a dress of Winnie's for Flossie. How her poor tired fingers worked and what thoughts of love were stitched into the folds!

Mr. McCullugh sat on the back seat with Flossie on his knee, and Ronald beside him, while Winnie, Edith and Charlie were in the front. Edith had to drive, of course, for she was a thorough sport and could manage the restless horses well.

When they arrived at the school-house the

crowd had already gathered, but they managed to get seats at the back. The concert was opened by the usual address of the chairman, and then followed a varied programme of recitations, dialogues and songs. The first piece, by little Sallie Young, Sam Young's little three year old daughter, was about little Jane's rag doll, but little Sallie had barely started when that mischief loving Roy Johnson threw a lozenge right in front of poor Sallie and so startled the young artist that her debut was rather a failure. Disorder reigned for the moment, but whatever Sam Young's new plan was it worked well, for the children afterwards kept better order than they were in the habit of doing.

The two pieces of interest to my readers were the song by Edith and the violin solo by Charlie. Edith's selection came near the end of the programme, and Charlie's solo was always left until the very last, for he usually ended with some catchy air that the boys could hum on their way home, but to-night they were to be disappointed in that respect.

Edith sang a song that her mother had taught her, so old, and yet one that will live forever, that favorite, "Three Fishers," by Charles Kingsley.

It is a song that cannot fail to catch the heart, and when Edith sang it with her won-

derfully sweet voice the hearts of the simple folks were touched and silence reigned. Even Roy Johnson kept mute while her voice rose and fell with the "moaning of the bar." No thought of self entered the song. She sang as a bird in the forest sings, free from all self consciousness, and thinking only of the song. The people always loved to hear her, but surely she was singing better, or were they only listening better, for somehow her song touched them to night in a way that it never had before. She seemed to realize that perhaps she was singing before these humble people that she loved, for the last time, and this feeling seemed to enter the thoughts of the listeners, for when the last verse was ended and her voice died away into silence there were not a few tears shed by the gentler sex, and old David McGee gave a long sigh as if he would like to sit still and think for the rest of the evening.

The applause that shook the building was a triumph indeed, but Edith did not seem to notice it as she took her seat between Winnie and Charlie, Winnie giving her hand a hard squeeze, Charlie looking straight before him, although it is not to be recorded here how he longed to follow her example, but dare not. When he was called upon he had no idea what he would play, for he had no music. Force of

circumstances had only allowed him to take very few lessons in Pictou, but when he began to talk to his violin he needed no music, for the strings knew his touch and responded in a beautiful way, like the rise and fall of the gentle wind on a summer day, then soft like love whispers from a heart too humble to speak them. It spoke of ambition, passion and longing, and of patience that had found its reward; but listen, the tones are sad now, and the strings seem to be singing of heartaches still to come, and of longings unsatisfied. He had never played as he did to-night, and when he lingered long and caressingly on the last note he seemed to be in a dream, so much did he enter into the spirit of the music. The people had never heard him play so well before. If they did not feel the passion or understand the longing in his playing, if their souls could not rightly interpret the wonderful music, they at least felt that Charlie McCullugh had done his best.

Edith at first could hardly believe that it was Charlie who was playing, but as the music soared on and on she entered more into the spirit of the violin and something in her heart understood, if not all, at least a great deal of the meaning of the song. When it was over she felt a dry pain in her heart.

Then everyone sang "God Save the King"

in a right royal manner and the wonderful entertainment was over.

The drive home was very boisterous as two boys, neighbors, asked for a lift.

"I tell you, Charlie," said John MacDonald, "why didn't you give us something good and jolly instead of that dead-and-alive stuff? It was enough to make any high-minded person sleep. But didn't Jim recite his piece fine?"

"Shut up!" said Jim.

"I tell you, Jim is a dandy!" John continued. "He just stands up and yells it out, that's the way. Never be a bit afraid. Only girls get frightened, eh, Flossie?" But as Flossie seemed asleep the torment went on.

"What's reciting anyway? Joe Grant recited a piece last year at the closin', ten verses long, and never blinked an eye-lash. Well, here's our turn. Thanks for the lift, Charlie. So long!" and off the boys went.

CHAPTER III.

THE LEAVE-TAKING.

The next day the girls went over to the little island. It really should not be called an island, for it was joined to the mainland by a narrow neck of beautiful sandy beach. It was this beach that had made the place a summer resort, for the bathing was very fine indeed. This narrow neck of land and the island itself sheltered the most beautiful little harbor. On the mainland the woods and hills, together with numerous little points and bays, made a very picturesque spot. In the cranberry season all the farmers made their way to the Island, as it was called, to gather the low bush berries. The girls took their lunch with them, so they were away all day. On the way home Edith must go through their empty house and climb the cherry-tree in the orchard, a feat she had accomplished very often with the object of robbing the laden branches of their luscious fruit, and then over to old Sandy's place across the fields to see if Topsy, the family pet they had entrusted to his care, was still alive, or if she had wasted away in the night, but they found that cats are not very human after all, and Topsy

was too busy playing hide-and-seek with the mice in the barn to even present herself for inspection. Ronald had promised to leave Sport, his dear old pointer, with the McCullughs, and Edith dreaded parting with him almost as much as Ronald did; however, the parting with this trusted friend was yet to come.

Every day seemed filled to overflowing, either in the fields tying the sheaves of wheat, for the harvest was ripe, or on the harbor in the sail boat. The days were not half long enough, and none was complete if a walk to the sea had not been taken and a swim in the salt waters of the grand old ocean enjoyed.

Life was very beautiful for them all. No forecast of the dark clouds that were to roll over their lives shadowed their joy and mirth for a moment. How much better that it was so, for surely youth, glorious youth, is the time for gaiety and laughter. When Fate begins to tangle the web of life around us, the laughter and gaiety give place for a moment to sorrow and sadness. Everyone should have a bright, sunny, gladsome youth to look back upon, when, later on in life, our lives become of necessity more serious and some of the dark passages in our book of life have to be written. Some day, when for us

the sun has ceased to shine, and even the moon does not seem to brighten the dark night, how a sunny, gladsome youth helps us to bear the burdens more lightly, and sooner to see the silvery lining to the heavy clouds! Mrs. McCullugh had passed through troubled waters, and how she worked in order to give the children pleasure and to keep their youth free and happy!

Winnie was now a young lady, and had begun to realize and to share in some of the problems that presented themselves every day, and she was indeed a great help to her mother. e was of a much colder disposition tha.. the warm-hearted Flossie, who was just a bundle of affection, sympathy and quick temper. Winnie was inclined to be practical and cool-headed, but Flossie was the very opposite.

The time was drawing near for the sad parting, and the day before the children were to leave was spent in saying good-bye to all the neighbors, and many warm hand-shakes and murmurs of "God bless you" remained long in their memory.

That evening Charlie suggested that they have one more race between the sail-boats on the harbor, for the night and the wind were all that could be desired. The neighbors were notified of the event. The race was to start

at eight o'clock. Ronald was to manage his boat, with Flossie to help hi 1, while Edith volunteered to go with Charlie. Winnie was to sail with one of the neighboring boys, and Roy Johnson also had his boat and a girl. The boats kept together going out as the wind was with them, but Charlie was a little in the lead.

"That is far enough, tack now, Charlie," Edith was calling, becoming excited as she perceived how near they were to the Island.

Charlie hardly seemed to be quite himself and failed to manage the boat with his accus tomed skill. He was so long in turning about that Ronald gained on him.

"Charlie, you stupid, do let me at the rud der. What's the matter with you?" Edith said, somewhat puzzled at Charlie's strange silence.

"Now, look out, Charlie," she hurriedly continued, "you are running right into the lea of the Island. Do be careful." She had no sooner said this than the boat struck a sharp rock, giving the bow a bad knock.

"That was a narrow escape and it is well the wind is no stronger or we would have put a hole in her. Charlie, are you sick?" And Edith moved up beside him.

He did not seem to see her. He was look-

ng straight out, away out, over the dark blue sea.

"Do you not feel well?" Edith asked again.

He looked at her and tried to smile, but it was such a wan, white smile it startled Edith. She took his hand in such an innocent way, saying,

"Let us go home, Charlie. You are not well, and are just trying to keep up, as it is our last night here, and you----" She suddenly stopped for Charlie was speaking.

"Edith," he said, and his voice sounded a little unsteady, "you are only a child now and cannot understand, but some day, dear, when you are older, you may think of this night and the meaning may be clear to you. I have always lived on the farm, and I long for things, just as you do to get your wonderful voice trained. I have my longings, too, but never expect to be able to satisfy them, neither do I expect to get the one thing above all others in the world that I most desire, but promise me this, that when you go away you will sometimes think of me. Oh, Edith," and his voice was low, "you do not know how much your promise will mean to me. Let me take your hands in mine and promise me that you will think of me sometimes and that you will make us a long visit after awhile."

Edith, if she had been a modern city girl, would have known at once that the young man was in love with her, but being a sweet, innocent girl, and young for her years, she only thought that Charlie was a dear friend, and she liked him very much. Why should he not be sad, for had he not always been so good to her?

So with her beautiful eyes looking up into his, she said,

"Why, yes, Charlie, I will often think of you, and of the lovely times we have had. Don't you remember how often we went skating on old Sandy's pond, and mother would always let me go to choir practice with you, for she knew you were a gentleman. How I will look forward to seeing you again, whenever mother will let me come. Cheer up and let us catch the boats."

But this return of gaiety was not welcomed by Charlie, although he knew that the things that were in his heart and meant most to him would have to remain hidden for a long time yet.

"Ship ahoy!" rang through the air, and the boats came alongside.

"What's the matter, old chap?" and Roy Johnson attempted to catch hold of their sail.

Charlie's answer was a quick turn about, leaving an angry frown on Roy's face.

"Who won?" Edith questioned, as the boats all steered for the land.

"Why, we did," answered Ronald. "Flossie is like a good fairy who always brings luck."

"Yes, indeed," Flossie retorted gaily, "we are a clever family at managing boats. See how well Charlie has handled his to night."

"Just gave your craft a gentle scratch for fun, I suppose? I guess we had better all go home. Charlie seems sleepy," interrupted Roy.

"Say, youngster," Charlie's face was red with anger, "I have taken enough impudence from you to night. Kindly mind your own business in the future. A great thing to learn in this world is when to speak and when to hold your tongue, and you kids have that to learn yet."

"Well, if you are in for a fight, Charles, I'm with you," answered impudent Roy. "Is the battle to be a naval contest, or is it to be fought out on the rocky point up yonder with fists as our only weapons? But really I don't feel much like fighting, I am too sad. My sweetheart is going away to-morrow," giving a sly glance at Edith.

"Oh, won't I wash your saucy face, Roy Johnson! I just wish I were a man and I

would make you sorry. You are just a horrid, mean scamp," said angry Edith.

Roy, even if he felt mean at annoying Edith on her last night, did not show it.

"Now, Roy," Ronald said, after the boats were made secure for the night, "I have a grave notion to trim you for your bad manners, but as I am not anxious to lay you up for a week I will only administer a gentle lecture, which in sum and substance is just this, remember it does not pay in this world to be anything but a gentleman."

This speech of Ronald's shows us quite clearly that he already feels the dignity of his sixteen summers, and understands that liberties taken by youngsters should be severely rebuked. Roy's anger blazed for a moment; it hurt to be snubbed before Edith, but he said not another word until they had reached the cross roads. They were saying good bye, and as it came to Roy's turn he colored up but gave Edith's hand a warm shake.

"I am very sorry you are going, Edith," he said, "and everyone will miss you. Some day you may see me. Dad has often promised to put me through for—— Oh, well, that's neither here nor there."

"Good-bye, Roy," Edith said, "and try to be a good boy for a change."

"So long, Ronald, wish you luck."

"So long, Roy," and the boys, the two closest boys in the school, parted. They were to meet again, but both would be changed; the future of each was to be bright with promise. Providence had been kind in giving them both many talents. But often it is not the number of talents, but how we use the few, that counts most in the race.

Sport, Ronald's dog, accompanied his master everywhere; he had scampered on ahead, and when they reached home their coming had already been announced. Ronald was very much attached to the dog. He was a most affectionate animal, as pointers usually are, and seemed to Ronald, in some ways, almost human. He dreaded leaving him, but knew how impossible it was to think of taking him. The only one to whom he would entrust his care and keeping was Charlie.

Poor Sport seemed to realize that some thing unusual was to happen. He went to sleep on the rug at Ronald's feet when he thought it was quite time for people, as well as dogs, to go to sleep; then he was carried away in dreams, off to the western plains, where many times he had hunted the prairie chickens and gone out into the muddy sloughs for the ducks that had fallen by his master's shot. But the western plains are far away,

and it was a long time since Sport had raced over the prairie.

The dog had been given to Ronald by a very dear friend of his father, who had used Sport for hunting in the West. Since Ronald had had him much petting and little work had made Sport very lazy, and the hunting was now so tame compared to that of the old days, but always his dreams were full of the happy hunting days in the West.

When he awoke the room was dark, but a voice he knew was near him, a hand was on his head, the touch that he loved. Ronald had gone to bed but could not sleep, thinking of Sport and of all that might happen to him when he could not be near, and had crept down in the dark to pat the old dog's head.

"Oh, Sport," the voice was saying, "how can I leave you? Why is it you are but a dog? If you were only a brother, old chap, I could take you with me. No more shooting in the woods for us, Sport; no more running after the rabbits; no more races on the beach; no more swims in the grand old sea. Sport! Sport!" and Ronald had lost his dignity and the weight of his years, and he was now but a sorrowful youth loath to part with his pet. The poor dog tried his best to understand, wagging his tail with great vigor and laying his head on Ronald's knee. A few hard, dry

s from Ronald was all that broke the still s for a few moments, and when the boy k Sport's head in his arms the poor dog w that the parting with his master was r at hand. But if dog instinct told him t, it spared him the more bitter knowledge the future, which neither dogs nor yet ople can control.

Poor Sport's days were nearing a close. rely three weeks had passed after Ronald's parture when Sport, racing through the ods, meddled with poison not intended for m, and when he crawled back to McCul ch's barn, life was too far gone to be saved. arlie worked with him until he knew there s no further use, and spared himself the ath scene. When the news reached Ronald felt very wretched indeed, for Sport, al ough only a dog, was a faithful, noble ani l, and these two qualities are to be admired en when found in the breast of a dog.

Everyone was up early the morning Edith d Ronald were to leave. Mrs. McCullugh make sure that Edith had forgotten thing, and the children because they could t sleep, they were too much excited. The ting meant so much to them. It was not ly leaving their friends, but uppermost in ir thoughts was the beautiful sea. How ld they leave it?

"The sea, the sea, the open sea,
The blue, the fresh, the ever free."

. . . .

"I'm on the sea, I'm on the sea;
I am where I would ever be;
With the blue above, and the blue below,
And silence wheresoe'er I go;
never was on the dull, tame shore,
But I loved the great sea more and more."

These lines of Proctor's were running through Edith's thoughts while she packed her small suit-case that she had brought with her. When she was ready Mrs. McCullugh came into the room holding in her hand a most beautiful piece of old lace.

"This, dearie, is for you. It is a relic of past days. I have quite a lot of these things, and this little piece I want you to have and wear some day. I have not worn any of mine for some years, but Winnie and Flossie are already anxious to use it."

"Oh, dear Mrs. McCullugh," Edith said, "I shall prize it, and coming from you makes it so much more precious."

"My dear child," was the sweet reply, "you have been like a daughter to me and we will all look forward to your next visit, and I hope you won't be long in making it," giv-

the soft pink cheek a gentle kiss. "Now, ..," she continued, "hurry up, the carriage ..t the door, and you have not much time ..ose."

At the station all the boys and girls were ..ere. Edith and Ronald were besieged on ..les with, "Be sure you don't forget us," .. "Come back some day," and, "Good-bye ..ll."

Charlie had only time to give the little hand ..rd squeeze, and to take a long look into ..ose dear eyes, when the train pulled out. .. was the last figure that held her gaze as ..train rounded a curve and sped on its way to the distant city.

Thus the children left the best part of their ..th behind them. The laughter, gaiety ..d innocent mirth which was theirs can only ..enjoyed once in a life, and that time had ..ed. There would be pleasure and fun ..ad, but it would never be the same as the ..d, free time that had passed so quickly for ..on the sunny Nova Scotian shore.

CHAPTER IV.

FADED GLORY AND A SADDENED LIFE.

Five years have passed. The bright winter sun shone in through the open window, lighting up the quiet little studio. At the piano sat the man who had attracted the attention of the whole musical world some few years back by his wonderful singing. Just when the star of fame and glory seemed to be growing fuller and fuller for him his wonderful career was cut short. From over work he became run down, contracted diphtheria, and after a most serious illness recovered, only to find that his voice, his wonderful voice, was a thing of the past. No more could he put joy into the hearts of the sad, nor brighten up lonely lives with his song.

His hair was white although he was still a young man, and his face wore at times an expression of great sadness, but recently the resolution to make the best of his life was slowly taking possession of him. He became more and more interested in his pupils, and life did not seem to be such a burden.

By the piano stood a maiden, yet in her teens, and we have not to look long before we

recognize the sweet, tender eyes and sensitive mouth and the beautiful golden locks of Edith. But what a change, and yet not a change, for the face is only more beautiful, and the rollicking, happy girl of a few years back has developed into a young woman, tall, fair, and lovely.

"Now, Edith," the master was saying, "you had better go home, take a good rest, and come to me early in the morning. The walk will do you good, and you must go over everything then in order that you may rest all afternoon. Remember one thing, forget that you are singing before an audience, forget that it is your first recital, forget that you have anything else in this world but just your voice. And remember, and remember," here his voice softened, "to put your whole heart and soul into your song, thinking only of the sadness in the world that you may brighten, of the darkness you can lighten, and of the wonderfulness of it all."

His usual sharp, almost gruff, manner had left him for a moment, and we catch a glimpse of his soul.

"And," he continued kindly, "don't wear blue."

The girl had been listening with fixed attention. She now moved to leave.

"I will do my best, Mr. Haufmann," she replied, "and my gown is to be white."

She was at the door when her teacher laid his hand on her shoulder.

"Please do not think I am sharp, Edith, but somehow your recital to-morrow night upsets me. It takes me back to my 'first,' and I am afraid I am jealous of your wonderful voice, and of your youth unsaddened by loss. Well, now, run away, and don't tire yourself to-night."

When she had gone and Karl Haufmann was left alone, he walked to the window and looked out. The sun was slowly setting in the west, and the earth seemed covered with a soft haze. The purple shadows entered his soul. He turned to the fire, now smouldering in the grate. Everything seemed dying, the day, the fire; and his heart was sad. He sank into the big armchair and his thoughts flew back to the lonely years since his bright career had been so suddenly cut off. How bitter at times he became, when he seemed to hate everything, everything that had life, everything that was beautiful, for his soul was dead. How well he remembered that last night when thousands were assembled to hear him—the wonderful Karl Haufmann—sing. How the glory of it had entered his soul, and he sang as he had never sung before. How

loved life then and gloried in it, for had he power in his voice to make people forget to sigh, forget that there was such a thing as sorrow, and to see the sunbeams through the deep shadows. How beautiful Irene, his false love, had looked that last night. How he had loved her then, and how he despised her now! The woman he had taken to his heart and to whom he had given himself. How cruel the world had been to him, how bitter he had become! If only Irene had remained true he could have borne all the rest; but to lose her when his heart was so sore, when his future had been snatched from him, was beyond endurance. How fair she had looked in her soft, clinging, blue gown. Bah! How he hated pretty women and blue gowns; and Edith was fair like Irene, and once when Edith had worn blue to her lesson how rude he had been, refusing to teach her until she had returned home and changed her gown.

The fire suddenly seemed to gain new light, it burned brightly, making the shadows in the room rise up to challenge the light. Out of the dead fire a new life seemed to spring. Could it be possible? Oh, no, his life had been too badly blighted, his heart was too dark to ever let in the sunbeams. Life was bitter, his soul was bitter, and it could never

be any other way. The fire cracked and the bright flames seemed to play hide-and-seek with each other.

He got up and walked to the window again. The sun had set and the earth was bathed in darkness. How he loved the night, for it seemed lonely like himself. What was the use, anyway? To-morrow night he would be gay, he would be bright, brighter than the people had ever seen him before. His heart would still be sad, but he would try to be what he was not. He would forget the lonely future that lay before, and the saddened past still clinging to him. This was the first recital of any of his pupils that he had consented to take part in. What a fool he had been to promise to accompany her! How she would sing, and her whole tender heart would be in her song! Would he not imagine she was Irene, standing there to mock him with her brightness and her beauty? But he must chase away this bitter mood into which he had fallen. He had been working too hard of late, and his nerves were unstrung.

He was expecting that new pupil to-morrow. A young man, the adopted son of his old friend, David Warren. Gerald, he believed, was the young man's name, and his friend seemed to think the boy possessed great talent and a fine voice.

He had not seen David Warren for many years, but he heard from him once a year or so, and the letters were always full of this boy Gerald. The old man wanted Gerald to have every opportunity in music, and he knew that Karl Haufmann could teach in a way no other could. The young man was to share Haufmann's apartments with him, and he hoped the experiment would prove beneficial to them both.

As he thought of this, life seemed much brighter already. To-morrow at noon Gerald was coming. He must give his housekeeper instructions as to which room young Warren was to occupy. His coming would put new interest into his life and he hoped the young man would be of quiet habits and good manners. As he left the studio and walked down the hall he felt brighter than he had for many days.

"The night passes,
See! the dawn creeps o'er the hills."

CHAPTER V.

ANXIOUS THOUGHTS.

As Edith hurried home her thoughts were full of the coming recital. How kind it was of Mr. Haufmann to play for her! She always sang better when he was near. She felt that his standard was so high that she could not do anything but her best, because he expected it of her. Her mother met her at the door.

"Well, dear, how did you do to-day?"

"Fairly, mother, but Mr. Haufmann seemed sad. I wonder why he told me not to wear blue to-morrow night?"

"Did he tell you that, dear?"

"Yes, don't you remember once last winter when I wore my pale blue broadcloth because of Helen's tea afterwards, he refused to give me a lesson until I came home and put on another gown. He is a very queer man at times, is he not, mother?"

"Oh, well, dearie, perhaps there is a hidden secret in his life. I often think there must be something else besides the losing of his voice to make him so bitter," Mrs. Grey said.

"Now to-day," Edith began thoughtfully, "he seemed to get quite sad for a moment. I

we could get him out here. Won't you him to your dinner-party next week, er? Please do."

"Why, Edith," her mother answered, "you a I have often invited him here, but he er would come. However, he might now. I certainly ask him."

"The other day," Edith remarked, after a , "he mentioned something about a new coming, some friend of his, who is to with him. Perhaps he will help to hten him up."

"He will most certainly, that is, if he is the t kind, and I do hope he is, for Mr. Hauf nn is a very fine man, but has, I fear, been king too much on the dark side of life. But pleases me greatly, Edith, that he has con- nted to play your accompaniments to-mor- w night, for it is a most unusual thing for n to do."

Edith sat still, looking at the fading twi- it, but her thoughts were not there, they l travelled on into the next evening, the ht of her first recital, and her eyes became amy and serious.

"Edith," her mother's voice interrupted, ome upstairs and see your gown. It just me this afternoon, and I am delighted with ."

"Just a moment, mother, dear, you have

interrupted such a lovely dream I was having. I only hope," she mused as she followed her mother, "that I can realize one-third of it. I wish sometimes that I could convert myself into a fairy and disappear until to-morrow night is over, and yet to make this recital a success is the dearest wish of my heart."

CHAPTER VI.

THE RECITAL.

The great evening arrived, and the hall was full, for the news had spread that Karl Haufmann was to accompany Miss Grey. Edith had been heard on several occasions earlier in the winter. Her voice had been much admired and talked of, and a very bright future had been prophesied for her. With her mother and Ronald she arrived a few moments before the time for opening. Karl Haufmann was already there and helped her off with her cloak while he laughingly asked her if she expected to sing flat or sharp.

"Now, you know that is not one of my faults," she answered, with a smile. "If I can forget myself and remember my song I shall be satisfied."

"I am sure you will," he replied, as he led her to the stage.

When they came into full view of the audience an immense applause greeted them. After Edith had taken a good look all around she felt quite composed. Her gown was of rare white chiffon, draped in graceful folds on her youthful figure, the only trimming being the piece of old lace which Mrs. McCul-

high had given her. Nothing could have suited her complexion, her golden hair and large brown eyes better, and indeed if she had been a fairy she could not have looked more beautiful.

The applause ceased and her glorious voice rang out in a "Spring Song" full and clear like a bell. She seemed to catch the spirit of spring, for her song was of the bright, warm sunshine, turning all the world into new life and hope and joy. The audience was all attention, and when the song ended Edith's success was assured. When she sang of love her voice was sweet and tender. Her selections were well chosen. Her style and expression could not have been better, and her phrasing was perfect. She sang without any apparent effort and responded to the repeated applause in a sweet, natural way that charmed the audience, and she was voted a "great success." When her teacher's bouquet was presented to her, and the lovely basket of roses from her friends, the clapping began again, and she left the stage amid wild applause. As the programme proceeded Karl Haufmann became more and more delighted with his pupil's voice, and yet how it seemed to take him back to "olden days." When he shook hands with Edith his heart was almost too full for words.

"You did well," was all he said.

The little dressing room was soon full of friends eager to offer their congratulations. Edith accepted with an easy grace of manner that was charming. She was ready to leave, as her mother and Ronald were waiting for her, when Karl Haufmann approached with a young man, a stranger to her.

"This is the new pupil," she thought.

"Let me present Mr. Gerald Warren, Miss [illegible], my new pupil," and Karl Haufmann stepped aside.

"Allow me to offer my congratulations on a splendid performance this evening, Miss [illegible]," Gerald Warren said in his musical voice. "I have enjoyed it immensely and am delighted to have the opportunity of meeting you."

"Thank you, Mr. Warren, but I assure you the credit is due to Mr. Haufmann," Edith replied, smiling.

They escorted her to the sleigh, and with a pleasant "Good-evening" to Mrs. Grey and Ronald, Karl Haufmann and his new pupil started to walk home.

"That girl has a wonderful voice, Mr. Haufmann," Gerald remarked, "and I should think there is rather an unusual future in store for her if she continues her studies, as I have no doubt she intends doing."

"Yes, I think so," observed Mr. Haufmann, giving the young man a searching glance.

"Remarkably pretty, too," continued Gerald, "and that gown becomes her mighty well. Suppose the family are well off?"

"I know nothing much about the financial position of the family, but it is reported that Mrs. Grey was left in very good circumstances, and I believe she is rather a clever business woman and probably has invested her money wisely and with success."

As soon as he had said this he felt sorry for giving the young man so much information. To change the subject he remarked,

"You will always have your lessons in the morning, at nine o'clock, as after that time I would find it hard to take you." He had heard the young man's voice that afternoon and was pleased with it. Gerald Warren had studied in Boston and felt that really this idea of his foster-father's of having him study under Karl Haufmann was only a fad, but knowing that, as soon as his musical instruction was over, he would have to settle down and prove himself an acquisition to the firm of Warren, Warren & Co., and not being too anxious to put an end to his present free and easy life, he took quite readily to the idea. One little thing had begun to trouble him already, and that was an impression he had

that Karl Haufmann would stand for no fooling and that it would be hard to have a good time under his watchful eye. However, there was the club, and surely no objection could be raised to his spending some time there. The rest of the walk home was taken in silence, and as it was late, they parted for the night in the hall, Karl Haufmann to retire to his studio and "dream," while Gerald Warren slept the sleep of the "worldly wise."

CHAPTER VII.

MUSIC AND A DINNER-PARTY.

It was Tuesday evening and the Grey's home, "Rosemond," was a blaze of light. The rooms were full of the fragrance of flowers, and the conservatory at the side seemed a mass of bloom.

Mrs. Grey received her guests, assisted by Edith, in the drawing-room. She looked very handsome in a soft grey silk, while Edith was the embodiment of youth in pale pink. The guests were all married people except a few young friends of Edith's and Ronald's. Karl Haufmann had consented to go in order to accompany Gerald.

Gerald Warren was a tall, handsome young man of dark complexion and large dreamy dark eyes. To-night he looked his best. His evening clothes were faultless and suited his style. Edith, the night of the recital, had hardly noticed him, but to-night as she welcomed him, and as he bowed low over her hand, she felt the warm blood dyeing her cheeks.

Mrs. Grey was delighted that Mr. Haufmann had accepted her invitation, and was very gracious to him and his friend.

When dinner was announced Edith found that she was to be seated beside Gerald. Mr. Haufmann had the place of honor, beside his hostess, and Gerald felt perfectly free to enter at once into conversation with Edith.

"I believe we are fellow-students, under the one great master,'" he said as he bowed towards Karl Haufmann.

"Yes, and I know you find him as great a master as I have," replied Edith.

"To hear my foster-father speak of him one would imagine 'sun ne'er set on such a worthy head.' I am sure," Gerald continued, "that I shall like him immensely."

"I am sure you will," answered Edith. "You have been in our city before, Mr. Warren, so that it is not new to you."

"No, indeed, Miss Grey, I have not. My home is in Fredericton, New Brunswick, or, at least, my foster-father's home is, which is the only one I have ever known, but I have heard of the wonderful Karl Haufmann since my school-days."

"You must have heard of him then before he lost his voice."

"Oh, yes, when he was in the zenith of his glory."

Edith looked over the table to see if their remarks should be more general, but conversation was flowing merrily. Her mother had

quite taken up the attention of Mr. Hauf mann.

"You are very fond of music," Gerald con tinued.

"I love it," Edith said, simply. "Who is it who has said, 'Music is a thing of the soul: a rose-lipped shell that murmurs of the eternal sea; a strange bird singing the songs of another world.' That is the way I love to think of music."

"Yes, that is very beautiful, Miss Grey. Like Longfellow, you think 'music is the lan guage of the angels.' I am looking forward to the pleasure of hearing you sing to-night. You are like music personified," he said. Their eyes met, and Edith felt again that she was blushing.

"Not before you do us the honor of singing for us," she replied.

The elderly gentleman at her right now took up her attention by asking how Ronald was liking the study of medicine, and when she was to give another recital.

"If I had been a young man, Miss Grey," he continued, "I would have fallen in love with you that night. You were like a fairy." and the old gentleman smiled at his gallant speech.

Mrs. Grey was now making a move to ad

urn to the drawing room and conversation became more general.

"We have a real Apollo to-night in the person of Mr. Haufmann," observed Norman Street, a young friend of Ronald's, to Edith. "Do you think if we presented a signed petition asking him to ease our saddened hearts with a single note of music that he would play for us?"

"I am afraid he would order us out of the house if we presumed to do anything of the kind," exclaimed a maiden at his side.

"What do you think, Mr. Warren?" enquired Edith.

"Let us try, anyway, Miss Grey. He seems to be in a jolly good humor. Your mother has been working miracles with him."

They were delightfully surprised when Karl Haufmann acceded to the request and charmed them all with his wonderful rendering of the "Moonlight Sonata." He seemed to enter into the spirit of the evening, and Edith had never seen him so affable and gracious. When, later in the evening, Gerald sang "A Song of the Sea" and "The Men that Go down to the Sea in Boats" Edith sat in a dream.

The days of her childhood came back to her, filling her mind with sweet memories. His voice was full and rich and he sang with

good expression. Nothing he could have chosen would have had the same effect upon Edith as a "Song of the Sea." The sea she loved, the sea she longed for—the sea upon which so many happy days had been spent. When the song was ended he took a chair beside her.

"That was lovely, Mr. Warren, but it has set me dreaming," she said.

"Why? Have you ever been at the sea, Miss Grey?"

"Oh, yes, shortly after father died mother took us to the seashore and for three years Ronald and I fairly lived on the water. I simply love the sea." And Edith's face expressed the love she had for it.

"Have you ever visited your old home since leaving it?" Gerald enquired.

"No, indeed, Mr. Warren, but I am looking forward to spending the summer there. We keep up a rather scattered correspondence with our friends there, but I have promised to visit them soon."

The evening was nearing a close and the guests asked Edith to sing for them before they left.

"Would you like me to play for you?" Gerald asked eagerly.

"Yes, I would," replied Edith, frankly.

They moved to the piano and Gerald began

looking over the songs. He came to an old familiar love song.

"Please sing this, Miss Grey," he whispered. He was standing very near her and once or twice in lifting the music their hands touched.

Edith felt the hot blood again mount to her cheeks, and his dreamy dark eyes seemed to have a peculiar magnetism for her.

"Oh, no, not to-night, Mr. Warren, but I will sing that little ballad, 'Three Fishers.' Here it is. The last time I sang this was in the little school-house away down in Nova Scotia."

"Perhaps there are tender memories connected with it?"

"Yes, very," answered Edith as she began to sing in low, sweet tones the song of the "call of the sea" and the "moaning bar." She sang with much feeling, and Gerald played in perfect sympathy with her. When the ladies were upstairs getting their cloaks Edith was showing Karl Haufmann and Gerald through the conservatory. She knew her teacher was very fond of flowers so she busied herself plucking the prettiest blossoms here and there and making them into a bouquet. He would not put them in his studio, for he said the odor of flowers would

rob the student of his voice, but he always loved to have them in his den.

Mrs. Grey joined them in a few moments and bore Mr. Haufmann away to show him some Oriental curios in the library. Edith and Gerald were alone for a moment.

Gerald had been wondering all evening how he could arrange to see Edith "often."

"Do you ride, Miss Grey?" he questioned.

"Yes, I do, a little, but reall it is so long since I have that I am afraid my riding would be anything but graceful."

"Oh, never mind that," hurriedly exclaimed Gerald. "I am very fond of riding and would love to accompany you on some jaunts if you would care to go."

"I think I would," replied Edith, simply.

"Shall I 'phone you some day, the last of the week, and we will arrange an afternoon? We will not likely have any more very cold weather now as spring is coming."

"Very well, and I will speak to mother in the meantime."

In the drawing-room, as he held her hand for a moment and thanked her for the pleasant evening, Edith felt that this man was affecting her in an unusual way, and when everyone had gone she spoke to her mother, asking her how she liked Mr. Warren.

Mrs. Grey felt tired and only answered that

e thought he was very musical and seemed gentleman. Edith did not mention the rid- g to her mother that night, but decided to so the following morning.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE HISTORY.

Gerald Warren was very much impressed with Edith's beauty and grace. As for her singing, he realized that she had a superior voice and he always admired a fine voice in anyone, mainly because he admired his own. He knew that he had a voice capable of unusual results, yet he lacked ambition. He inherited a lazy, easy going nature from his father, who had been an Italian of rather good birth, whose restless, roving disposition brought him to Canada, where, after a few months, he married "Cora Lee," a variety actress. She was a good woman, but extreme poverty, with only her meagre earnings for their support, soon reduced her to almost a shadow of her former self. Her husband squandered his earnings, and what he could get of hers, in gambling houses. A few years of this kind of life soon told its tale. "Cora Lee" was stricken with fever from which she never recovered. After her death Gerald, only a year old, was taken to the Orphans' Home, where he remained until the age of twelve, when he was adopted by James Warren, a rich wholesale merchant of Fredericton.

At that time his parentage was not known, shortly after his mother's death his father killed in a railway accident, leaving the e lad an orphan. It was some years after Mr. Warren learned the facts concernin Gerald's parents from a man who had known em.

"Cora Lee," when the little chap was born, termined to give him an English name, so was called "Gerald." Mr. Warren, seeing possibilities in Gerald's voice, urged him study, sparing no expense, but lately he beginning to think perhaps he had made mistake in not putting him at business. however, this was to be his last chance, and he did not seem ambitious to be an artist would have to settle down to business. Mr. arren, knowing Karl Haufmann's remark- e past, hoped that he might be able to part to Gerald the desire for an "artist's e," but he was to find out that Gerald's congest desires did not lie in that direction. Gerald had been struck with Edith's ap- arance the night of the recital and had cided to find out if she would be worth ore than just "beauty and grace." At the De Quincy Club," of which he became a mber a few nights after, he found out that Mrs. Grey was worth considerable money and

that she had been speculating on a large scale through the firm of Herrick & Co., brokers.

As Gerald had a gentlemanly appearance and was the possessor of a peculiarly attractive manner for the opposite sex, he decided at once that Edith was evidently impressed. His large, dreamy eyes, and a sort of poetical expression, together with this great charm of manner and his wonderful voice, could hardly help leaving its impression on a young, musical mind like Edith's.

He decided to enjoy himself and fall in love with her, and he felt quite sure that she would do likewise, then, if he thought the money was sufficient, he would marry her. Surely a moneyed wife would please his foster father.

CHAPTER IX.

A RIDE AND A RACE.

The sun was shining in all its splendor, making the whole white world dazzlingly beautiful. The day had arrived for Edith and Gerald to take their first ride. Gerald had secured two splendid horses and he was surprised and greatly pleased at the ease and grace with which Edith mounted and rode the other restless animal. They had decided to take the path around the mountain, for nothing could be more beautiful than the cedars when the winter had lain upon them her white mantle of snow. Edith was a vision of youth as she smartly cantered ahead.

"I do hope you will not find it too cold, Miss Grey," Gerald said, as he came up alongside. "I know it is not quite the riding season, but I love it on a fine winter day like this. The sun is warm and we are sheltered from the wind. Are you quite warm?"

He looked splendid to-day, and the fresh, bracing air gave him a good color. His eyes seemed to shine with unusual brilliancy. Edith could not help admiring him; in fact, she had already confessed to herself that she liked him immensely.

"Oh, yes, indeed, I am warm—warm. You know I am as hard as a nut," she responded with a little toss of her head. She was in good spirits to-day.

"After we get around this curve, Mr. Warren," she continued, "let us have a race, and a box of chocolates to the winner. Now, come, let us start."

Edith's eyes sparkled with fun and merriment. In a moment they were off, with both horses going at a gallop.

"Miss Grey," Gerald called, as Edith's horse went tearing along, he was afraid that she would lose control of it, but soon she had the spirited animal at an easy trot and Gerald overtook her.

"What's the matter with your horse?" Edith laughingly questioned, "or is the rider the guilty one? I am sure I would not send you in pursuit of my lover if he were to fly away from me."

"No, indeed, you would not, Miss Grey, for I would not pursue him, and if I attempted it I should not bring him back to you."

"Oh, how wicked of you, Mr. Warren, and my heart might break over such a loss!"

"Yes, but then your lover would never want to flee from you."

"What a pretty speech, Mr. Warren Let us have another race to kiss the blarney

stone," said Edith, giving Gerald a mischievous smile.

"Well, it is true, as well as pretty, Miss Grey, and if your lover should ever give you the faintest impression that he thought for a moment of such a thing, let me know, and instead of bringing him to your feet I would deliver him to the police as a criminal of the most dangerous kind, and would myself wait to see that judgment was meted out to him."

"You have the true missionary spirit," laughed Edith, "and I assure you I will do as you request."

"But," interrupted Gerald, "suppose I was a lover and my lady-love was flying away from me, not even the slowest old nag in the world could keep me from quickly overtaking her and pleading with her to return."

"How tragic we are becoming, Mr. Warren. Let me return your gallantry and say that after your winning this race I feel quite sure you should have no trouble in proving yourself equally able to win others, but see," and Edith stopped her horse to look around to the west, where the sun was slowly setting, "is that sunset not all that could be desired as a picture of beauty? How the colors seem to blend into one another, from the golden to the deep red. Look, it sinks lower and lower

and soon the earth will be wrapped in shadows. We had better return; don't you think so?"

The ride home was taken up in discussing Karl Haufmann and his wonderful method of teaching.

"I often wonder," observed Edith, "why he is so sad at times. Mother and I sometimes think that there must be a sort of 'buried romance' in his life."

"I have often heard my foster-father speak of it," answered Gerald. "Early in life when his singing was making such a stir in the musical world he had a sweetheart, a very beautiful girl. They were to be married in a short time, when he was taken ill and lost his glorious voice. Then the pretty sweetheart discovered that she loved him no longer and left him without so much as a word. She then, if rumor is correct, manifested a strong love for a very wealthy man and they were married. She lives in the States somewhere, and I believe that is one reason why Karl Haufmann settled in Canada."

"Oh, isn't that sad! And you're sure it is true. No wonder he looks sad at times. How anything like that would blight a life," Edith said, earnestly.

"Yes, it must necessarily cut pretty deep, and he is a very proud, sensitive man, but he

seems to be more cheerful lately. Miss Grey, I think the little time he spends with your mother and you in your home does him a world of good."

"Thank you for saying that, Mr. Warren. We do love to have him come, and lately he has been more sociable in that respect. Since the dinner he has been in once or twice, and it pleases us to think that he cares to come."

They were nearing the house now. When Gerald helped her down he held the little hand in his for a moment. Looking into her eyes, he said,

"And when, Miss Grey, will you allow me the pleasure of another ride with you? Shall we say in three days from now? Please do, you know they shall be weary day of waiting for me."

"Oh, Mr. Warren," Edith was smiling, "I trust your suffering will not be too severe, and I think Saturday afternoon, at three o'clock, would suit me; just three days from to-day. You will soon be sorry that you mentioned riding to me. I will be taking advantage of your kindness."

"It is a great pleasure I am doing myself, Miss Grey," Gerald answered, with all the gallantry at his command.

When he had ridden off Edith felt herself wishing that she had invited him to come in:

however, perhaps it was better so. This man, his handsome face and fine singing were entering altogether too often into her thoughts, and indeed she was afraid that she had been rather frivolous that afternoon; she certainly must be more dignified in the future.

But the "next ride" was only to be followed by another, and still others, and so the weeks flew by, crowded with pleasure.

CHAPTER X.

A BUSINESS TALK.

When she entered the house her mother had a guest in the library. Who could he be? As she passed the door she recognized the voice of Mr. Herrick, the broker.

"Why will mother persist in doing business with that man?" Edith thought, "when Ronald and I both dislike him. He gets the name of being 'thoroughly honest, but venturesome,' and I myself think he has gone speculation crazy.'"

But she soon forgot them again, as up in her room her thoughts flew to the next ride with "the dark-eyed knight."

Mr. Herrick had only arrived a few minutes before Edith's return. He was a short, dark man, who spoke in a very convincing manner, and was thoroughly businesslike.

As Edith passed the door, he remarked,

"That was Edith, was it not, Mrs. Grey? She grows more like you every day. Now Ronald is a fine chap, but is the image of his father. I am sure he will be just as fine a man."

"Yes, I trust he will, Mr. Herrick," Mrs.

Grey answered, "but you had some very important business to discuss to-day, I understood."

"Yes, but it is so important that I was a little slow in speaking of it. First, you have confidence in my judgment, have you not?"

"Yes, Mr. Herrick, we have done quite a lot of business together, and I have never had cause to complain of your judgment so far."

"That is good. In our last venture, did you not reap a pretty good harvest, considering the amount invested, and has not the money invested in the 'Toledo Mine' been bringing good dividends? To my thinking, that was one of the best strokes of business we did, and I am sure the five thousand you put in that new railroad could not have been invested to better advantage."

"Yes, I know that, Mr. Herrick, but I am beginning to think lately that so much investing is not good, and I have almost decided to do no more of it."

"Do not decide upon that, Mrs. Grey, I beg of you. Was it not that last big venture of your husband's that proved to be the best stroke of business he ever did; and have you not been reaping the benefit of it ever since?"

"Yes, that is all true, but what is this new

scheme, Mr. Herrick?" Mrs. Grey answered. "Let me hear it."

"It is just this," Mr. Herrick continued, in his sharp, business way. "The other day two men called at our office, and in a few moments I found out that they had a pretty good proposition. You know of the 'Great Bear Mine,' Mrs. Grey, and how it has proved to be one of the richest mines in our day. These fellows have a large property adjoining it, which they could never be induced to sell, although a good many men have been after it. Of course, we will have to pay a pretty good price for it, but I have been talking to some prominent business men here, and two of them have decided to go largely into it. The thing is, we have to pay two hundred thousand dollars down to buy it. It seems a lot, but when you consider just what we are getting the sum does not seem to be so much. The land is directly opposite and adjoining the 'Great Bear' property, and you know, Mrs. Grey, the big dividends it is paying. Why, they say it is an acknowledged fact that they have gold enough in that mine to last for thirty years yet. I am leaving on Monday, together with Mr. Adams and Mr. James, to view this property ourselves, and if we are pleased with it what I want to know is, will you help us out? What we want is to

own it amongst the four of us. What's the use of getting more into it when we are able to have it ourselves?"

"Has the property been prospected, Mr. Herrick, and has anything been found on it?"

"Well, of course, it has been gone over a little and a few veins have been discovered. They are only surface veins, of course, so far, but we are taking with us a first-class engineer, who will tell us the truth about it. Veins surely must run from the 'Great Bear' somewhere, and we have no reason to doubt but that this new property will prove to be equally fine, if not better. Now please think about it, Mrs. Grey, and I would not advise you to do this, nor do I advise you yet, but after I return, and find out for myself, whatever I say then, remember, I only say with your best interest in view, believing it to be a wise thing. I trust I have not worried you."

"Oh, no, Mr. Herrick, but it seems a great deal for me to put into this thing—one-fourth of the amount would mean nearly all my fortune. If anything happened that I should lose it, it would just mean that my income would be only the dividends coming in from my former investments, which would not be enough to live on. I will wait until you return, and, dear knows, you may not be at all pleased with the property. I have confidence

n your judgment, Mr. Herrick, and I believe that you would not advise me unwisely, that is, knowingly."

When he had gone Mrs. Grey could not keep her thoughts from this new scheme. "He is an honorable man, I know," she mused, "and Mr. Grey had perfect confidence in him, so surely his judgment is good. It seems a great deal to pay, practically my all, but if it would bring in great returns, what I would miss in holding back! And when he is going into it himself surely he must have confidence in it. Oh, well, he knows practically nothing about it as yet. Perhaps when he returns he will not be so optimistic. I must not worry about it anyway. Dinner is ready, there is the gong, and here is Edith."

As Edith threw her arm around her mother's waist and led her into the dining-room Mrs. Grey forgot about "mining stocks" and such things, and listened with interest to the account of Edith's ride. Hers was a cheerful disposition and one that worry had, as yet, made no marks upon.

CHAPTER XI.

STEERING THE WRONG WAY.

"Mother, do you know from whom I had a letter this afternoon?" Edith began, when, after dinner they were seated in the library around the cheerful fire to have a quiet half hour before Ronald began his studies.

"No, my dear, but I suppose from some great friend, probably Mrs. McCullugh."

"A very good guess, mother," answered Edith. "I have not heard from her for a month or more, and I was beginning to wonder what was the matter. Winnie generally writes, but she is away on a visit to Pictou."

"I suppose they are well?" questioned Ronald.

The few years that Ronald had spent in the city, at school and college, had made very little change in him, except that he was taller, broader, and quite a young man. He was now finishing his second year in medicine and showed marked talent in that direction. Mrs. Grey at first thought that Ronald would be a lawyer like his father, but she soon saw that he was not intended for that. His choice was made entirely by himself, and he was proving that he had made a wise one.

"Yes, they are all well," answered Edith, but Mrs. McCullugh wants to know how Roy Johnson is. She says Mr. Johnson was there the other evening and he had not heard from Roy for some time, so long that he was becoming anxious. You know, Ronald, Roy used to come here sometimes in the evenings with you, but lately I have not seen him."

"No," remarked Ronald, "I have not seen him either for some time. I am afraid he is with rather a gay lot. All the fellows think him clever, and he seems to be going around with some of the 'fourth years.'"

"This is his second year in law, is it not?" asked his mother.

"Yes. I know he spends his spare evenings at some pretty swift club down-town with these fellows, so I guess he forgets to write home."

"That is too bad," said Mrs. Grey, thoughtfully. "He is a very clever boy, and I am so sorry that he is getting into that kind of company. Couldn't you say something to him, Ronald?"

"Well, mother, we have never been very friendly, and of late he hardly speaks. He has been a little wild the last year, and now he seems to have plunged right in, and if a fellow is inclined that way it's pretty easy to have all you want of it."

"Yes, Ronald, and especially when a boy is away from home, and, indeed, being very clever," continued Mrs. Grey, "often proves more than some boys can stand. Temptations seem to lie in wait for them that do not beckon to the more ordinary."

"Very true, mother, the fellow who has to stay in at nights and plug away is often saved from more than he is aware of."

"Well, mother, I don't like to tell Mrs. McCullugh all that," complained Edith.

"See here," interrupted Ronald, "don't go and blurt that out, Edith. That's the trouble in telling women anything; over the fence and away they go to tell the first one they meet."

"Now, Ronald," gently corrected his mother, "that is not gentlemanly. Mrs. McCullugh will expect Edith to say something about Roy, and it is hard to know just what to do. I think perhaps a good sharp letter from his father might do him good. You had better," continued Mrs. Grey, after a pause, "just tell Mrs. McCullugh what you know, Edith, and let her use her own judgment as to the best thing to do. I am sure whatever she does will be right, for I have never known a sweeter, wiser, or a better little woman than Mrs. McCullugh, and if Roy ever alludes

t you can tell him exactly what you did, ith."

"I would say nothing about it," com nted Ronald, as he was leaving the room to upstairs to his den to study. "His father l find out all about him in the summer time n he goes home."

"Yes," Edith interrupted, "but he told me e time ago that he didn't intend going me this summer as he is to be in some law e."

"Oh, well, I don't think a letter from home ld do him much good," continued Ronald he left the room.

Edith and her mother sat for some ments in silence, deep in thought, watching e crackling of the fire and the merry flames ce up and down. Mrs. Grey was the first speak.

"Was that all Mrs. McCullugh said, ith?"

"Oh, no, mother," and Edith roused her- f and smiled. "It was such a long letter, ing me all about everything. I think Win- e and a young doctor from Pictou will ely be engaged soon. You remember me eaking of how often she has mentioned name in her letters, and now she is visit- g some friends in Pictou, so I guess Winnie's heart is gone."

"You are quick in coming to conclusions, Edith, but I am sure if Winnie proves to be a wife after her mother's style she will be one worth having."

"Indeed she will," asserted Edith, "and Mrs. McCullugh says they have just bought a piano and are having so much pleasure out of it. Flossie is going to the school in Pictou, and Charlie is away somewhere--she did not say where. He is with some friends, I think, and oh, mother, she wants to know just when I can go, in May, June, or July, or for the whole three months. What will I tell her?"

"Well, dear," answered her mother, "you can take your holidays just whenever you wish. When Mr. Haufman was here last night he told me that he intended going away in June, or the first of July, for his trip, so, of course, when he is away is the best time for you to go in order that you will not miss your lessons. You know that Ronald is going into Dr. Craig's office for the summer, so that he will not have many holidays; but, dearie, when you return from your trip perhaps the three of us may go away for a week or so, that would be nice."

"Mother, if I were not going down east we could take our little cottage again for the summer."

"No, dearie," Mrs. Grey answered, while

she took Edith's hand in hers. "Ronald would not come anyway, and I will enjoy myself more here with him than there alone. It is not as if we lived in the heart of the city. Now, Edith, I will go upstairs with you and we will write to Mrs. McCullugh, and then you must decide what you want to wear to Helen's dance next week. So come away."

Edith threw her arms around her dear mother's neck. "You are a darling, mother, and just the best woman that ever lived. I hope that some day I will be like you."

"What nonsense, dear," said her mother, gently, but with a sweet smile.

"No, it's the real truth, mother," asserted Edith. "But I would much rather sit here and dream beside the fire than go upstairs and write a letter."

What her dreams would be we will leave the reader to guess, but there would, methinks, be a little mixture. A vision of a bright winter day and a mountain path with "a knight on a fiery steed," and perhaps just a little of the seaside home to which she was to wend her way when the robins had returned, and the trees and the fields had shaken off their winter garments and taken upon themselves coverings of emerald green, when the roses had begun to bloom and all the world gloried in being alive once more.

CHAPTER XII.

A MINING VENTURE.

Mr. Herrick had been away for ten days. Mrs. Grey had received the engineer's report on the property, and the probabilities were all in its favor. Some few veins had been touched, but of course no one could ascertain exactly until a certain amount of work had been done on the property, whether or not the gold would run deep. Certainly the location of the land was all that could be desired. The "Great Bear Mine" had proved to be such a marvellous success that there was little possibility that this land, directly adjoining, would not prove to be equally as valuable. One thing was strange, and that was that the "Great Bear Company" had not bought the property at almost any price if they had faith in it; but they were given to understand quite clearly that the "Great Bear Company" had tried repeatedly to make a deal but would not come up to the figure

While Herrick and his companions were there they were shown through all the workings of the "Great Bear Mine" and it was simply wonderful. They were filled with en

usiasm to get hold of the new property and turn out the ore in the way these people were doing. One of the managers happened to be there and they had a short interview with him. Mr. Herrick stated briefly who he was and what he was after.

"Yes," Mr. Morse, the manager, said, "I should think the property would be a good one. Of course the men that own it have done no work on it. Nothing has been done except the 'tappings' of the various prospectors, so that in reality you would have to work it first to find out its value. The location is the very best."

"It is strange you do not own it, Mr. Morse," said Mr. James.

"Well, the truth of the matter is, we have so many veins here to the right of us to work, and of course we own all the property to our right for quite a distance, so that we have not branched out on the other side at all."

If Herrick & Co. bought the property they would be taking it altogether on faith, but then, there was hardly room for doubt, everything seemed to be so promising. The men agreed to take one hundred thousand dollars down, the rest to follow within thirty days.

As the gentlemen boarded the train for home they felt highly pleased with the deal, and bright visions of "millions in gold"

completely blurred their sight so that scenery, people and sunshine were all lost to them.

The day after Mr. Herrick's return he made his way to Mrs. Grey's to let her know what had been done, to tell her of the glorious prospects before them, and to get the promise of her help.

"Yes, Mrs. Grey," Mr. Herrick said, in answer to her first question, "we were all so much pleased with the prospects that I want you to know of them at once," and he proceeded to explain to her the splendid location of the property and the grand possibilities that were in store for it. He also explained to her what he had seen of the "Great Bear Mine" and of the marvellous wealth it contained.

"So you see, Mrs. Grey," he continued, "if this property of ours turns out even half as well our fortunes are all made. However, I will not urge you to invest in this thing, for, of course, in mining business nothing is sure until you have your hands on it."

Mrs. Grey could see clearly that he was very enthusiastic over it, and from the glowing picture he painted she also became very much interested.

Her husband had speculated in this way, never very largely, but still very successfully, and she had also done a little of it and

never yet met with failure. So why should we hesitate about this? Surely Mr. Herrick would not be rash in such a matter.

"Now, Mrs. Grey," Mr. Herrick was saying, "we have paid down one hundred thousand dollars. I do not wish to urge you to put your money into this, and if you do not I hardly think it would be a difficult matter to find other interested parties," and the broker smiled contentedly. "But I will give you a week to think about it before I make any effort to get other capital into it. Some scheme will have to be resorted to in order to raise the necessary money for working the mine, but we can attend to that later. We have not decided yet if we will put the stock on the market or not. If you decide to invest I will keep you acquainted with our moves and you would, of course, have to be consulted regarding everything, but that will depend entirely upon your decision."

"Very well, Mr. Herrick, I will think about it and let you know," and not many suns had set ere Mr. Herrick's expectations were realized. Mrs. Grey decided to invest thirty thousand dollars in the mine.

Such was the way in which a great part of Mrs. Grey's fortune became invested, and time alone would tell the tale of success or failure.

CHAPTER XIII.

SUNSHINE AND A GREY CLOUD.

Winter was flying. Already spring was wafting its warm breezes over the face of the snow, making it slowly melt away and lose itself for ever. The robins had begun to build their nests anew in the tree-tops. Here and there the snow had quite disappeared, laying bare the "mother earth," soon to be covered with glorious green. Spring was indeed coming, bearing joy and gladness in its train. The winter, with its clear, frosty air, is welcomed by the true Canadian, but with what good cheer do we usher in the first signs of spring.

The winter had indeed passed quickly for Edith. Her lessons and singing took up a great part of her time, then the season had been so full of gaiety and pleasure that the days seemed too short and twilight always came too early, and after twilight the hours took upon themselves wings that they might fly. "When youth and evening meet time is forgotten."

Mrs. Grey never denied Edith or Ronald any pleasure that did not interfere with their studies, and indeed they had both, since pass-

the "girl and boy stage," always shown good judgment in that line. Edith was now in her twentieth year and her mother realized that between the ages of eighteen and twenty five is really a very enjoyable period in a girl's life, but it is also a time that requires very careful guarding. Impressions are easily made. The sky of youth is bright and rosy; no clouds, dark and lowering, have passed over the sun to blacken the sky and cast dark shadows on the land. Life's sky so far for Edith had been rose-tinted, and when "little grey clouds" would shut out the sunlight for a moment 'twould soon pass and be forgotten in the brightness that followed. Happy are the lives whose morning is all sunshine, and those who, when the noontide of life comes, with its little spots of grey and black, can still see the sunshine; then, when their lives are carried on to "twilight" and the sun is setting low behind the hills, it casts no shadows, dark and gloomy, for even for their souls have followed the sunshine.

There are some who, wherever they go, carry sunshine with them, for no matter what dark clouds arise they can see the "silver lining." How much better we feel when meeting such a one. We are helped to take up the burdens with a cheerful heart.

and instead of looking for the "shadows" we try to see the "brightness."

It was late in the afternoon and Edith had been out in the garden examining the rose bushes, for she treasured them very highly, and they were her special care. 'Twas hard to tell just yet, for in some places the snow was still about, but they all looked as if the sunshine and the warm rain would renew them. The climbing roses around the dear old summer house, how she loved them, and what a pretty sight they made when, in June, they covered the lattice-work with their fragrant blossoms.

"Mother, dear, are you not glad that spring is here?" she called as her mother appeared on the side verandah.

"Yes, dear, I am, and I was just wondering if my bulbs will do well. What a pretty sight they will make in the large bed, and somehow I always love the spring blossoms best, for they are so quick to show themselves after the snow is gone. They are the fore runners of so much beauty. But, Edith," she added, "is this not your riding day?"

"Yes, mother, but did I not tell you at lunch that Gerald, or rather Mr. Warren," and here a faint blush dyed her cheeks, "telephoned to say that he thought the roads were unsafe and asked me if he could bring

ome songs up to night for us to practise to ether."

"That was very wise and thoughtful of m," remarked Mrs. Grey, "for I am sure e roads are not at all safe. Come into the ouse, dear," she added, "for the air is cool, nd I want to talk to you."

Edith followed slowly. She felt that her mother had something serious to say.

"Now, Edith," and Mrs. Grey's voice carried with it deep concern, "you do not call Mr. Warren, Gerald, do you?"

She had always been a companion to her daughter, but lately Mrs. Grey felt that there was something, a new something, in Edith that she did not quite understand, and yet she dreaded what it might be. Edith had a great many friends, young men, college chums of Ronald's, and others, whom she addressed by their first names, and Mrs. Grey had never given it a thought; but somehow with this stranger, for they had only known him a few months, it was different. She hardly realized how often he had been to her home and how much Edith had been in his company. He was a man of the world, attractive, accomplished, and so polished and handsome. From the first Mrs. Grey had a feeling that he might prove very pleasing in her daughter's eyes, and of course Edith was

so beautiful and charming that—oh, well, Edith was pretty level-headed, and she knew that opposition would only tend to make matters worse.

"Mother dear," Edith answered, as she turned shyly away from her mother, "do I not call many of the boys by their Christian names?"

"Yes, but Mr. Warren is not a boy."

"Why, he told me he was only twenty-five, mother," and Edith opened her eyes wide in apparent wonderment at her mother's statement.

"Yes, but, dear, I do not wish to consult you regarding his age. Come here and sit down beside me, for I want to ask you something quite serious, and I want you to answer frankly, for you know, dear, that your mother is the very best friend you can have, and we have never had any secrets from one another."

"Yes, mother," and Edith's eyes were not looking at her mother.

"Has Mr. Warren ever spoken of love to you, dear?" and the great "mother love" was looking out of Mrs. Grey's eyes.

"No, mother, he has not," came in a very low voice from Edith.

"But, dear," continued her mother, as she drew Edith's hand into hers and looked into

the lovely eyes, "I trust my girl is not caring for him in any way but as a friend."

"Oh, mother!" and Edith flung her arms around her mother's neck. "This man, Gerald Warren, is a very dear friend. I love to hear him sing. His voice is wonderful, mother, and he is so handsome and manly, I do like to be with him; but no,—no, surely,—I only think of him as a friend. I know that is all; and yet, mother, when I am with him and he sings one of his wonderful songs I feel that there is a sort of magnetism about him, and—but I think it is nearly all admiration. I don't know."

"I am glad you have told me this, Edith," her mother answered. "Of course it is only admiration that you feel for him, nothing else. I do not want my daughter to think of anything else for a long time yet. Remember, dear, if a little scheme I have in my head turns out well you can perhaps study abroad next winter. Your voice will take up all your attention for a good many years yet, and I do not want you to think of anything else."

"Yes, I know, mother," Editn answered, somewhat relieved now that she had told her mother, "and I think it would be perfectly grand to be able to study under 'Marchesia,' for instance, yet I think Karl Haufmann can teach as no other one can."

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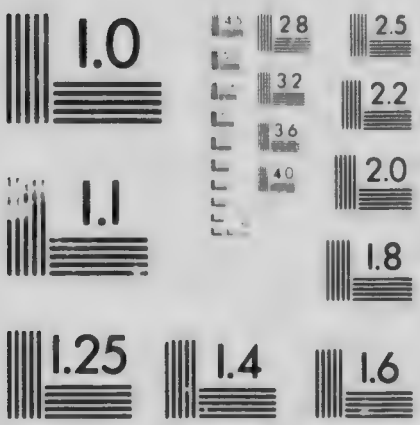

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"But next year, dear, is far away, and we will not make plans yet," replied the mother.

"But, mother," questioned Edith, shortly, "do you not like Mr. Warren?"

"Yes, Edith, I do like him very much at times. But I think there is something very restless about his eyes and manner, and lately Mr. Haufmann does not seem to care to talk about him. Of course, you know, dear, that his parentage is rather 'uncertain,' and we do not know very much about him—but still he seems to be a gentleman at all times, and I like that. I have noticed, too," she continued, "that Ronald does not often come down when he is here, and he used to. Of course, Ronald is busy with his exams. now, that may be the reason."

"Mother," Edith said, and she was her bright, charming self again, "it is time for us to dress for dinner. Ronald will soon be here, and Mr. Warren," and here she smiled mischievously at her mother, "said he would come early."

CHAPTER XIV.

REMARKS, AND LOVE BEGUN.

At the dinner table Ronald was relating some incident that had happened during the day, when, glancing at Edith, he noticed how lovely she was looking.

"Say, youngster," he remarked, "you look pretty fine to-night. That pale blue is your color. Suppose Warren is coming, eh? I think," he hurriedly continued, "that you are seeing too much of him lately. Remember, he is not of 'noble birth.' "

"Now, Ronald," answered Edith, with heightened color, "I think it horrid of you to speak in that way; he is an adopted son, and his parents may have been very fine people for all we know."

"Yes, likely," jeered Ronald. "His father was the fifth son, long removed, of the King of Poland, and his mother cousin-in-law to the great Empress of China."

"Well, Mr. Haufmann told me that his father was a gentleman. I do not think you have any right to talk like that, has he, mother?"

"Dear knows," continued Ronald, "he may be a happy mixture of Chinese and Turk,

still, he does not look like a Chinaman. Those dreamy dark eyes of his look more like a son of Italy, don't they, mother?"

During this conversation Mrs. Grey had remained silent, but now she said very gently,

"Ronald, you are not acting like a gentleman, and, Edith, you should not take things so seriously. Ronald, I am sure, was only in fun, yet he has forgotten that a gentleman should not make such rash statements."

"Anyway, mother," interrupted Ronald, "we really do not know very much about this man, and is it not wise to err on the safe side? You know, my dear sister," turning to Edith, "you are so beautiful and charming in my eyes that I know you must delight the eyes of others, and, really, I do like you immensely"—this with a broad smile—"really I do," he continued, "and you are the only little sister I have and I want to be careful of you."

"I am sure you are kind," returned Edith, proudly, "but little boys generally have quite enough to do to look after themselves, and I am capable of looking after myself, thank you."

As she said this the door-bell rang. Edith made a sweeping courtesy to her mother and Ronald, and in a moment ushered in Mr. Warren. Ronald had taken advantage of the

moment to make his escape, and was seen no more that evening.

When the usual greetings had taken place Gerald could hardly withdraw his eyes from Edith. She was a vision of beauty to-night. He never remembered seeing her look so perfectly splendid. After they had gone to the drawing-room to practise the songs, he said, as he began arranging the music on the piano, and, fixing his large, dreamy eyes on her,

"I felt so completely lost this afternoon, Edith," and his voice rested lovingly on the sweet name, "without the ride with you, and I suppose until the roads become clear our rides will be events of the future. I have grown to look forward with so much pleasure to them. The day would have seemed a blank if I had not been able to see you to-night," and his eyes held hers with a sort of subtle fascination. "Would the day have seemed the least bit empty for you if I had not come to-night, Edith?"

Edith could not help showing a little embarrassment. Why did he look at her like that? and why did his low, earnest voice affect her in such a manner? She did not know just how to relieve the tension, so she laughed nervously.

"I am sure I would have had to be taken

to the hospital to morrow, Mr. Warren. But now we must go over some of our songs."

"I thought I was to be 'Gerald' after last Saturday, Edith, when we agreed to be the best of friends."

"Very well, Mr.—Gerald—let us proceed. Where is your music?" she continued. "I thought you were to bring some selections from Il Trovatore. What is the matter, Sir Knight, have you forgotten them?"

The momentary embarrassment had passed, and Edith resolved to be gay.

"No, I did not forget them, but thought we would leave them for another night. Here, this is a pretty little love song, 'My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose.' Shall I sing it for you?"

"Yes, please do."

"Say please do, 'Gerald.' "

"I couldn't possibly," answered Edith. "Surely you do not need to be coaxed to sing to me about your far-away love who is like unto 'a red, red rose.' How delightful and delicate she must be!"

"No, for my love is not like unto 'a red, red rose' at all," said Gerald as his eyes searched hers. "She is like unto a rose of another color altogether."

"Ah, probably like unto a yellow rose," said Edith, her eyes dancing with mischief.

"But, beware, Sir Knight," she continued, "if she is yellow in color, she will be jealous, and what could be worse than a jealous woman?"

"Yes, that would be a calamity; but my sweet love is like unto neither a yellow nor yet a red rose. I would be afraid to say just what color, in case you might tell her," he continued as he tried to lay claim to one of her hands, but Edith quickly moved to the mantle and stood looking down into the fire.

"But, Edith, you have not answered my first question. If you will, then I will tell you of what colored rose my love is like unto." He was by her side now, and stood looking down on her sweet, youthful figure and dreamy, winsome face. She stood there, never lifting her eyes, for some moments.

"Edith," he said, in a low, soft voice.

His face was very near hers now, and his breath fanned her cheek. With a sudden, quick start she realized how near he was and felt that she must somehow end this. She turned and walked to the piano. Ignoring his question, she said, without looking at him—she could not trust herself to, "Are you not going to sing for me, Mr. Warren?"

Gerald now felt that it would be wiser, tonight, to drop the "serious role" and adopt a more frivolous one. He did like everything

to have the right "setting," and when he proposed to Edith he would be careful to do it when he thought she was in the proper mood. He should have waited until he had sung a few love songs for her. Oh, well, he would wait until a more fitting season.

There was no hurry. He felt pretty sure of Edith, but she was much more "difficult" than most of the girls he had made love to, and forgotten. He was well practised in the gentle art of love making and knew every little intricate part and how to handle it. He honestly thought that he loved Edith, somehow she was different from any other girl he had ever known, and he meant to marry her when he married anyone.

"Very well, Edith," he said, with such a bright smile that Edith was puzzled for a moment by the quick change of manner. "Shall we sing together? Here is 'Kathleen Mavourneen,' let us sing this. The melody is such a beautiful one."

After all, did he not prove that he was indeed "skilled," for no other way he could have acted would have had quite the same effect upon Edith. While they were singing the song she could not help wondering what he meant, and thought perhaps he did not care for her after all. She began to wish that he had said something more. They sang

several songs, and then Gerald said in the easiest manner possible,

"May I turn the lights low, Edith, and we can sit watching the merry flames while you tell me, as you have so often said you would, of your Nova Scotian home. Did you not say you were to make them a visit soon? I hope you do not really intend to do so. Do you?"

"Yes, I think so. I have some very dear friends by the sunny seaside, and I think I will have a delightful summer there. The bathing is perfect, and the air is so fresh and pure, right off the briny ocean."

"But you will not be away all summer, will you?" and there was a note of truly deep concern in the question.

"I think so, or nearly all. I expect to go the first of June, and remain two months. Perhaps," she added, after a moment, "I may not stay that long, for mother wants us all to take a little trip together before I begin my lessons again."

"It will be a lonely summer for me when you are gone, Edith," Gerald said in such an ordinary voice, "and I am sure Mr. Hauffmann will be completely lost when he cannot come here to have an evening with his 'dear friends,' as he always calls you and your mother."

"But mother will be here all summer, I ex-

peet," answered Edith, "but then, you know. Mr. Haufmann expects to spend six weeks abroad. He is to visit London, to see some of his mother's people, who, I believe, live there."

"Yes, and his father's people live in Germany, I believe," added Gerald.

"Yes, and he has not seen any of them since losing his voice."

Thus conversing the embarrassment of the early evening was forgotten. When Gerald discovered how late it was he bade Edith a hasty good-night, adding,

"May I bring 'Il Trovatore' up some evening soon, Edith? This is Friday, would Monday evening suit?"

"Yes, we will be in, Mr. Warren," Edith answered, as she accompanied him to the door, "and I trust you will not forget to bring your music."

He was opening the door when he turned and looked straight into her tender eyes.

"Good-night, Edith," he said, and there was a little smile playing around the corners of his mouth.

"Good-night."

"Is that all?"

"Good-night, Johnny," and then the air was filled with merry laughter.

Edith came back into the drawing-room,

stirred up the fire into a fresh blaze, sat down in an easy chair, and before long a dreamy, far away look came into her eyes. The fire began to crackle and shoot up flames of bright red, and the merry sparks were having a lively time. Still Edith dreamed on. The shadows in the room began to play hide and seek with one another, and occasionally a tiny star would peep in at the window.

At last the fire became tired of life and settled down to die. A dark cloud passed over the moon and the shadows in the room deepened. Then Edith arose with a start. "I wish I could just sit here and dream until Monday evening," she whispered to herself as she took a last look to see that the fire was out. As she went upstairs she began humming "Kathleen Mavourneen."

CHAPTER XV.

LIGHT AND SHADOW.

One night as the spring was blending itself into summer and the robins had built their nests anew in the tree tops, the frogs were singing a chorus in the pond nearby, and the trees had taken up themselves fresh foliage of green, Mr. Haufmann was on his way to spend the evening at "Rosemond."

Somehow he had begun to feel very much at home with Mrs. Grey and Edith, and he also had a strong liking for Ronald, but he saw him very seldom now, for examination time was near at hand, and Ronald was busy.

As he passed through the gate and up the pretty walk that led to the quaint stone home of the Greys he noticed how the tulips had stretched forth their hands and were now showing themselves above the earth. How he would miss the dear old place and the quiet evenings spent with the sweet, motherly woman and her bright daughter. When he came, feeling bitter with life and all he had lost, they would show him the folly of such thoughts, and when he left his spirit would be refreshed, life would not seem half so bitter and sad. What a blessed privilege to

dle to brighten some soul and to sweep a
y of the cobwebs out of his life, for there
e cobwebs and dusty corners in everyone's
e no matter how bright the exterior may
e.

He met Mrs. Grey as he neared the house. She had been out looking at the spring plants.

"Do you not think my bulbs have done well?" she enquired of him after welcoming him. "Of course they are rather late in making their appearance, but that is not their fault. The bed is too much protected by the trees, you see, and they need the sunlight."

"Yes, they are splendid," he answered. "Of course they need the sunlight, everything and everybody does. How continual shadows dwarf any life, plant, animal, or human," he continued, thoughtfully, then added more lightly, "I have decided to begin my holidays a few weeks sooner than I had intended, Mrs. Grey, so that I may be back earlier, for I do not want to miss seeing those lovely roses of yours in full bloom, and then May and June are the best months for England."

"I am sorry you are going so soon; will you not feel the heat here in July and August? Or perhaps when you get with your friends and relations they will induce you to spend the whole summer with them. It would do you so much good."

"Oh, no! I have no very close relations, Mrs. Grey," he said, as they began to move towards the house. The air was getting cool. "My parents died when I was quite young, and my only sister died shortly after I lost—when I was a young man," he added, quickly. "So you see I have only some aunts, cousins and such like. It is not at all likely that I will stay very long. I will be anxious to get back. You will be here all summer, will you not?"

"Yes, Edith is to visit some friends in Nova Scotia, but Ronald is to be with Dr. Craig all summer. I think the practice and experience there will do him much good."

"A trip away will be good for Edith," Mr. Haufmann said, thoughtfully, when they were seated beside the cosy fire in the library. "She has had a little too much gaiety this winter, Mrs. Grey. I have become very fond of her, and of her beautiful voice, and I am much interested in her."

"Yes, I know you are, and she has become so attached to her teacher," Mrs. Grey said pleasantly. "I am sure she will sorely miss her lessons while away, but you remember last summer she only had one month's holiday, and I imagine she needs a good long rest before starting again in the fall."

"Yes," assented Karl Haufmann, "of

course Edith is older this winter and has had more gaiety, I imagine. She has so many friends, young ladies and young men," and here he raised his eyes to Mrs. Grey in rather an enquiring way, watching her expression as she said,

"Yes, she has had a gay winter, but then, Mr. Haufmann, youth is the time for gaiety; if youth passes without it middle age cannot recall it." After a moment she added, "She and Mr. Warren have such delightful times together singing He is a most entertaining man. I am sure it is a pleasure to teach one with such a splendid voice, Mr. Haufmann?"

Now it was Mrs. Grey's turn to lift her eyes and watch the expression on her listener's face.

Sometimes she felt very much like telling him her fears in regard to Edith and asking him frankly to tell her just what he thought of Gerald Warren. She liked Gerald very much, and yet often—more so of late—he did not seem quite the same; not so frank of manner. She began to wish that Edith did not know him quite so well. Would she tell Mr. Haufmann? Again and again she asked herself this question; but then Edith and Gerald were only friends, and Edith had told her herself that no word of love had ever passed between them, and she was sure—yes, sure—

that Edith liked him only as a friend, yet she felt to-night very much as if she would like to tell Mr. Haufmann about her worry, but no- she would not. Surely if Gerald Warren were not what he should be Mr. Haufmann would tell her.

Karl Haufmann thought for a moment before he answered. He really would like to tell Mrs. Grey something about Gerald Warren. He knew nothing definite, except that the young man was out nearly every night of late, sometimes until morning. He had never taken much of a fancy to Gerald. There was something about the young man that he did not like: something rather insincere, he thought. He had a splendid voice and could have made something unusual of it, but he lacked ambition. Mr. Haufmann had fully made up his mind to tell his old friend David Warren that there was no use in spending more money on his voice.

There was no use in alarming Mrs. Grey, for surely Gerald and Edith were only friends. Still he did not like the hours the young man kept, and, indeed, he did not like the appearance of some of the friends who sometimes called for Gerald. Whenever he had spoken to him regarding better hours he had always had some excuse or explanation to give, which seemed quite feasible at the

time, yet it set Mr. Haufmann wondering. He had fully decided to find out everything he could about Gerald from his old friend David Warren this summer as they had arranged to take the ocean trip together. He would say nothing to Mrs. Grey to make her uneasy. After he came back would be time enough. Edith would be away all summer and perhaps forget all about her admirer.

"Yes, he is an interesting young man, Mrs. Grey," he replied, "and has a fine voice. However, I think he is going into business of some kind this summer."

"I suppose he will be returning to his home?"

"No, I believe not. David Warren and I are going together to England and Gerald is getting some position here for the summer to get broken in before he goes into business with his father."

Then Mrs. Grey took her guest into the conservatory to show him some new plants and blooms she had. How the plants seemed to waken up in the spring and do their best, and Mrs. Grey had a rare collection.

"I can't tell you, Mrs. Grey," Mr. Haufmann said, as they again entered the library, "how much these evenings spent with you have meant to me. They have taught me to see the bright side of life again, and have

taken my thoughts away from sadness and gloom. I remember," he continued, in a low, earnest voice, "how hard it was for me to break away from my hermit habits and accept your kind invitation to dinner that first evening; how glad I have been ever since. I have taken, as it were, a new hold upon life, and I am learning to forget the past, and not to worry about the future, but just live each day as it comes, trying to see as much sunshine as I can. What a dark, heavy cloak gloomy thoughts form for you, and how it seems to tighten as the time goes by. The only way is to cast it away from you and get out into 'God's sunshine,' and I am learning to do that. Your home, Mrs. Grey, is such a sweet, peaceful place; everything seems to harmonize. I might have had such a home, too, but—perhaps 'twas for the best, who knows? Life is given to us to make the most of it, and there is no use crying because we cannot have all the flowers in the garden."

"I am so glad, Mr. Haufmann, that you enjoy coming to our home, and I trust you will always do so. The gratitude should be with us, for the honor you do us and the pleasure you give us," Mrs. Grey said, gently.

"If my sister had lived, and had a home, I imagine it would have been like this, Mrs. Grey," Karl Haufmann continued. Then,

after a moment, "But I must take my departure. Edith will be home very soon and she must not catch me keeping such late hours or I am afraid my lecture on 'beauty sleep' would not be taken seriously."

"Yes, she is at the opera with Mr. Warren to-night," replied Mrs. Grey. "But we will see you again before you go, will we not?"

"Oh, yes."

Just as he said this the door opened and Edith entered, the picture of youth and loveliness. Gerald followed her and gave a little start of surprise when he noticed Mr. Haufmann.

"Oh, I have caught you," Edith announced, gaily, "keeping late hours; and after that tearful lecture yesterday about going to rest, and ten o'clock. But," she added, quickly, "we are delighted to see you, and mother is so lonely when I am out. Are you not, mother?" And she laughed merrily.

After a few moments of such pleasantry Karl Haufmann and Gerald took their leave. They decided to walk home as the moon was bright; the merry stars were twinkling high up in the heavens, and the "milky way" formed a bright path across the sky. They walked on in silence. As they neared home Gerald ventured to remark,

"I suppose Mrs. Grey has been telling you of the big venture she is interested in?"

"What do you mean?" snapped Karl Haufmann.

"Why, what a good many people in town are talking about; this 'Twin Bear' syndicate, or, rather, it is believed that Mrs. Grey is one of four who have bought the property adjoining the 'Great Bear Mine.'"

"Well," said his companion, angrily, "that is none of your business, nor of mine."

"No," assented Gerald carelessly, "but I had no idea that Mrs. Grey was so wealthy."

"And what does that matter to you?" was the sharp answer as they entered the house, and Mr. Haufmann proceeded upstairs to his den.

"Surely," Gerald thought, "Mrs. Grey must be quite a lady of means when she ventures so steeply into one project."

He was glad he had heard the "news" that lay, for lately, ever since "that night at the club," when Ronald was there, he had felt a little uneasy about Edith. Of course, Ronald would not tell her, for that would implicate himself, and 'twas nothing anyway, yet he would much rather that she should never know just what his habits were until he had everything fixed. Surely he might as well marry a girl with a moneyed mother, and if

mine proved anything like as rich as the "Great Bear" Mrs. Grey would be a very wealthy woman, and so would Edith. "The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agee," as we will see.

CHAPTER XVI.

A LOVED ONE STRICKEN.

The sun was streaming in through the open window, filling the room with its warmth and radiance. Mrs. Grey and Ronald were looking out at the pretty lawn which was now a mass of green. Scattered here and there were flower beds filled with precious seed, for the bright sun and warm rain to woo into bright, beautiful life. Luncheon was ready and they were waiting for Edith.

"What is keeping her, mother?" Ronald said, impatiently. "I have a lecture at two o'clock and have no time to lose."

"We will not wait then, Ronald," his mother said gently, as they started luncheon.

In a few moments Edith came running into the room; her face was white and she seemed greatly excited.

"Oh, mother," she exclaimed hurriedly, "do you know what has happened? Poor Mrs. McCullugh has had a fearful accident. They are afraid her spine is injured. Isn't it wretched?"

"Keep cool, Edith," Ronald retorted quickly. "Can't you tell us how you know, and how the thing happened?"

"Oh, dear, I have just had a letter from Winnie, and they are nearly heart-broken over it. She is suffering terribly, and it all happened so suddenly. She had gone to Truro to visit a friend for a few days, when stepping off the train, on her return home, it did not wait long enough for her to alight, she slipped, fell on her back, and had to be carried home. Oh, mother, I feel so sad!" And Edith looked the picture of misery.

"Winnie did not go into details," she continued, "her letter was short. They are so nervous about her, for Mrs. McCullugh is such a tiny, delicate woman. It will so hard for Winnie, having her mother to nurse, for Flossie is away at school."

"Yes, indeed it will," said her mother. "I am very sorry for poor Mrs. McCullugh. What a lot of suffering and trouble that little woman has had, and through everything she has shown the noblest spirit. God has given her a small body, but a large share of Christian grace," she continued thoughtfully.

"She will need it all now, I guess," said Ronald. "I must go, mother. No, I cannot wait for anything more. There is always something to keep me late. I wonder if Charlie is at home. Do they ever mention him?" he asked, as he was leaving the room.

"No," Edith replied, "they never say very

much about him. In the last letter Winnie mentioned that he was away up in the country somewhere with a friend."

"Making his fortune, I suppose," remarked Ronald as he threw her a kiss. "Cheer up, Edith, it may not be as bad as they write."

"Mother," Edith questioned, after a few moments of silence, "do you think I could go next week? I know this is just the first of May, but it would not be much sooner than we had intended, and how I would love to be with them now, in this their new trouble. Can't I go, mother?" and she looked up at her mother, who seemed deep in thought. "I would come back that much earlier, and it would do me a world of good. How I long for the fresh breeze from the dear old ocean, and to see them all again."

"Well, Edith," her mother answered at last, "it would mean a little rush to get you ready for next week, but I think we can manage it, and you might be of some help to them. I am sure you would," she reflected. "I will be lonely when you go. It seemed so far in the distance that I hardly realized you were really going, but this brings it very near—however, dearie, we have no time for such thoughts. Let us write a little note to Winnie telling her that you are starting the first of

next week and that you will make an excellent little nurse, for you know, dear," and here Mrs. Grey laid her hand on Edith's shoulder and looked into the sweet, wistful face, "it would be very wrong for you to visit them now when all this new trouble has come upon them unless you prove yourself a great help." Then seeing the hurt look in Edith's eyes, she continued lightly, "But I am sure that you will do the right thing, dear."

"I hope they will not think that I shouldn't go," murmured Edith. "Winnie said nothing about my going in this letter."

"Now, dear," interrupted Mrs. Grey, "how time flies. I must be off to my meeting. I thought we would have had time to write our letter before I went, but we will do that to-night."

"I do hope, mother, that that man Mr. Herrick is not getting you into any more mining schemes. If I were you I would not trust any more money with him."

"Why, you haven't heard anything about him, Edith, have you?" and Mrs. Grey's face paled for a moment.

"Oh, no, mother, but I do not discuss Mr. Herrick or your business with anyone."

"That is right, dear. I am glad you are so wise and thoughtful. It is never nice to discuss personal matters."

She had told Ronald, but not Edith, of this last big venture of hers, but Edith knew that her mother had money invested elsewhere and that the business was done through Mr. Herrick.

"I must be off now," her mother continued, "and you will be busy practising while I am away, I suppose. I have to go to Lady Munroe's tea on my way home, so I will be a little late. I told Mary not to serve dinner until half past six as I could not be home earlier."

"All right, mother, if you see Helen at the tea tell her about my going next week."

When her mother had gone Edith decided to make a tour of the lawn and garden before she began to practice. The seeds were all doing well. In many places tiny little shoots of green were showing themselves above the soil.

"How I shall miss watching you," thought Edith. "And when I return you will all be healthy plants. What great lessons the flowers and plants teach us. I wonder if Mrs. McCullugh's garden will be as lovely as ever. Oh, dear, I hate to think of her lying in bed suffering, and I suppose she will be laid up all summer! How miserable to be shut in all through the lovely summer months! Never to wander in the woods, listening to the birds all singing in chorus; never to get out into

God's clear sunshine and breathe in the fresh, sweet air from the ocean; never to sit on the sand by the seaside and watch the breakers dash in and then sweep out, far out, to return again with greater vigor than before; never to watch the tide slowly ebbing out into the great beyond. Oh, dear Mrs. McCullugh, I will try and brighten the dreary days for you."

How she had longed for the time to come when she could visit her dear old friends. Often at night she had lain awake dreaming of the times when she could wander through the thick, leafy woods where she had played so often; go through the dear old house that she had loved, and, oh, for a sail in the same boat that had carried her so often out from the harbor into the rough waters of the sea, but not very far out had they ever gone lest the waves and the wind prove too much for their slender craft. Oh, for a bathe in the clear, briny waters, to feel the crested breakers dash over her; to swim out a little way and rise and fall with the billows! She could hardly keep from dancing when she thought of the beauty and pleasure of it all. What a lovely old place the McCullughs had! She could almost see the big stone house with its low, broad chimneys and the two large bay windows at the side. How it nestled

amongst the trees; from the road only the chimneys could be seen. How she remembered the hammocks swung beneath the trees, where she had so often lain and listened to the lonely call of the whip poor-will as the evening shadows fell and the lonely bird would wing its flight higher and higher up into the heavens. It was five years since she had left them all, and they would be so much older, she supposed. Winnie would not care for fun, and Flossie, but surely Flossie would still be the same little mischief as in the olden days; and Charlie—but he was away. He would not be changed much as he was always grown up.

Somehow she felt it would be rather lonely without Charlie to take them around everywhere, but she could drive, and, of course, so could Winnie and Flossie, so they would manage nicely. Still, how much nicer it would be if Charlie could be home! But really she must not count on much pleasure when poor Mrs. McCullugh was so ill. Indeed, she would not think of pleasure at all, but make it a pleasure attending to her patient, and Edith walked slowly into the house, feeling very sad and sorry for her friends. Such is the way youth jumps from sadness to gladness in a moment; and then to sadness again; but back again to gladness, and rests the longer with the gladness.

CHAPTER XVII.

A LOVE SCENE.

The evening shadows had fallen on Edith's last night at home. To-morrow she would be speeding away to the home of her childhood; to the clear, blue sky, the crystal sea, and her dear Nova Scotian friends. Little she knew how the summer months spent with them would change the whole course of her life, add to its sweetness, and also mix a little bitterness with it all; but the bitterness would only tend to make the whole sweeter.

Gerald Warren had come to bid Edith good-bye and she was singing for him as it would be so long before he could listen to her voice again, he said.

She did not sing a love song, for she dare not lest her voice should betray her feelings, but she sang a song of Spring, and while singing it she kept trying to compose the restless beating of her heart, for something within her told her that he had the look in his eyes to night that she had seen there once before and would not read the meaning of.

To-night if he took her hand and looked into her eyes she could not laugh as she had done then, for she knew he could not help

seeing something not quite akin to laughter in them. As he looked down on her as she sat running her dainty fingers over the keys and her clear, bell-like voice rose and fell with the song, he knew he had never seen Edith look so lovely before. She was a vision in pure white, while her heightened color, bright eyes and golden hair formed color enough for the picture. Just before Gerald came she had plucked a lovely pink rose and fastened it in her hair.

"I see two beautiful roses," Gerald said, when the song was ended.

"Yes, where?" said Edith, feigning surprise.

"You are one, Edith, and here is the other," he said, softly, as he pointed to the one she wore.

"I see only one," she answered, smiling. "I could not liken you to a rose, could I?"

"No," Gerald responded lightly, "I would more easily be likened unto a dandelion."

"No, indeed, you are hardly yellow enough for that, I am afraid. I can hardly tell just what flower you would resemble," Edith answered coolly, lifting her eyes to his, but she withdrew them in a moment, for 'twas too dangerous an experiment. "Come," she said, "let us have a little promenade while I tell

you all about the sea. Have you ever been there?"

"Yes, quite often."

"Ah, but still you have never been on the Nova Scotian coast, have you?" and not waiting for an answer, she rambled on, "How I love the sea, the grand old ocean, that has carried so many mighty ships on her breast. It is lovely to camp on the shore and at night to hear the low, restless murmur of the waves as they wash up." She forgot her elf for a moment in the thought of the sea. "I could talk about the sea for hours," she continued, "but I am sure you are not one bit interested, are you?"

"Edith, is pink your favorite color for roses?" Gerald asked, disregarding what she had been saying.

"Yes, I think it is," Edith said, as she moved quickly to the window. "Look at that moon, how it sails along! See how the clouds seem to be flying, too. That is the way my train will be speeding along to-morrow, carrying me away—far away."

As soon as she said this she was sorry for having done so. Gerald was by her side in a moment. What a fair picture she made, standing there in the moonlight! Now was the time and the hour.

"Edith, do you know what a pink rose means?"

His voice was low and earnest and his eyes were trying to look into hers. She dare not trust herself to look any place but at the moon, and Gerald was glad, for the moonlight fell directly upon her upturned face, making her more beautiful than could be imagined. She tried to think of something amusing to say, but could not.

He took her hand in his and drew her gaze down—down—from the silvery moon, until her beautiful eyes looked into his, and he could read what was hidden in their depths.

"Edith, do you know that a pink rose means love—love—" and his low, musical voice seemed almost whispering the words. "Love, the greatest thing in the world. Oh, Edith, my darling, let me tell you of the love that has been growing in my heart since first I knew you, how you have filled my thoughts and life and heart, until now I must tell you. Oh, Edith, how empty life would seem if I cannot have your love in return!" His voice was growing in passion and longing. "Edith, darling Edith, my love, my life, tell me that you love me and life for me will be a rose-colored dream, a continual love song, tender and true; a clear sky, with you as its only

star. Edith, sweet Edith, be my star, my light, my love, my life, my wife."

All this he said, and more.

Edith's hands were resting in his. She felt the firm pressure of his fingers on hers, and her heart was beating wildly in her breast. She was carried away as in a dream; his low, passionate voice breathed of love. How she had dreamed of love and of this dark, handsome knight now gathering her in his arms.

"Speak, Edith," he whispered. "Tell me that you love me. Say 'I love you, Gerald.'"

How lovely it was to feel his arms about her, and to know that he loved her. Of course she loved him.

"I love you, Gerald," she murmured, as he pressed his passionate lips to hers.

"Say it again, sweetheart," he murmured.

When they were both very sure that they loved one another as no others had loved since ever the world began, Edith freed herself from her lover's embrace.

"How will we tell mother?" she questioned eagerly.

"Darling, would it not excite her to learn about it to-night? I should not have bothered you on your last night at home."

For answer Edith only gave him a sweet smile.

"Yes, but there will be no time to-morrow

and you would not like to do it alone, would you, Gerald?" she asked.

"No, indeed, I would not," the lover answered.

Gerald did not take pleasantly to the idea at all. Making love to a pretty girl was one thing, and asking the mother for the "lady's hand" was altogether a different task.

He did not want a hurried marriage or anything of that kind. He had an idea, yet he must breathe it softly.

"My darling," he said, as he again took possession of the little hands, "you will be away all summer, and oh, how lonely I will feel, and your dear mother, too, how lonely she will be. Would it not be just as well to tell her nothing until you return, and then she will know that time and separation have only increased our love. Perhaps I had better tell her shortly after you leave and ask her permission to claim you as my bride, and then, darling, you could write and let her know whether you love me or not."

Edith remained silent for a moment, thinking. She did not altogether fancy telling her mother at once; indeed, she felt a little uneasy about that part of it. Somehow she thought that perhaps her mother might not be any too well pleased, and still, to keep a secret from her was a thing she had never

done yet, and she did not like the idea of doing so now. Yet there surely was no use in worrying her about it now. When she was away she could write telling her mother everything; so with a little sigh she said slowly:

"Very well, Gerald, perhaps it would be better. I can write and tell mother all in a few days. Let me know when you speak to her, or intend doing so, and I will write her then, and, Gerald," she continued, ever so shyly, "you will write often, will you not?"

"Darling," he answered, "will you find the time long? Will you be one bit lonesome for me? I am just afraid you will forget me when you are amongst your dear Nova Scotian friends."

"Oh, Gerald, how can you say that? I am sure I will not. I am getting sorry already that I am going away at all. I will be thinking of you so much."

"Oh, you darling, do you mean that? And I will think of nothing but my sweetheart and be always picturing the time when you will come back and I can take you in my arms, covering your dear lips with love kisses again; and, dearie, you must not let anyone steal your affection away from me, for life would be to me but an empty dream if you did not love me."

"Oh, what nonsense, Gerald. There is no one there to fall in love with me or I with him."

"I have often heard you mention a Charlie somebody."

"Yes, Charlie McCullugh, at whose home I am to visit, but he is so very much older than I am, and then, he is likely engaged to be married to some one by now. Poor Charlie could never be the one for me, because you love me," and Edith's cheeks crimsoned as she said this.

We will leave the lovers alone at the parting. Needless to say, Gerald continued to play his part admirably, and was to be at the station ten minutes before the train left on the following day. He felt quite sure it would be a very hard task to see her sweet face for any length of time and resist the desire to bid her a fitting good bye, so he must take his time about it now, and he did.

"Lovers in May,
Lovers in June;
And life flows on
Like a merry tune."

CHAPTER XVIII.

SPEEDING AWAY.

On, on the train sped, passing hill and dale, forest and plain, on its journey towards the ocean. The greater part of the journey was not remembered by Edith, but as they came nearer and nearer her destination places became more familiar. With a sudden jolt the train pulled up at station N——. How well she remembered it all—the old station, and so many of the old stores and buildings, but so many new ones, and so many changes. No, surely that was not the same station-master! Mr. Brown had been such a big, jolly man, and this one was tall and severe looking. No familiar face could she see, but what a feeling of joy and happiness took possession of her to be so near her dear old home!

The McCullughs were to meet her at the little country station of L——, just four miles distant. She at first thought that perhaps some one might have driven into town to give her a surprise, but no one was there. She could not help wondering who would meet her. There was the whistle—time was up—and off the train started once more. Probably Charlie and Winnie would meet her; but

no, Charlie was away; she was always forgetting that. It would be Winnie and Flossie, in the old carriage that she had ridden in so often. Surely the train was not stopping again. Yes, there was the little biscuit box of a station, and a horse and carriage, but not the old one. What a pretty carriage! Was that Flossie trying to hold the restless animal? Edith could scarcely contain herself until she alighted on the old narrow platform, and in a minute Winnie and Edith were clasped in one another's arms.

On the train sped, leaving Edith with her friends. For a few seconds neither Edith nor Winnie could speak, each was so surprised at the change in the other, or, we will not call it change, but just added graces. We left Winnie a tall, handsome girl of eighteen; now she is a young woman of twenty-three. What beautiful eyes she has, and such hair—masses of auburn locks. Edith never remembered seeing such lovely hair before.

How Edith had changed, Winnie was thinking, from the jolly, laughing school-girl to the beautiful maiden, for Edith was indeed beautiful, and what added charm to her beauty was her apparent unconsciousness of it, for self-consciousness spoils anything, even beauty.

"Winnie! Winnie!" Edith exclaimed, "I

am so full of happiness at seeing you again. I can hardly tell you how glad I am. You have changed, yet still the same sweet, lovely Winnie."

"And, Edith," Winnie said, "how I have been dreaming for months of your visit. We have all talked of nothing else, but of Edith Edith."

"Oh, you dear! and there is Flossie! How you have grown, Flossie, nearly as big as I am; and the same golden curls. Let us jump in and I will drive, and I am sure this little pony will have the run of her life."

In a few moments they were off down the road, leaving a cloud of dust behind them.

"But do tell me how your dear mother is," Edith said.

In a moment the laughter was changed to a look of worry and pain.

"We are hoping for the best, Edith," Winnie answered sadly, "but poor dear mother suffers so much."

"Tell me about it, you know your letter was so short," and Edith's voice was full of sympathy and tenderness.

"There is not much to tell, Edith," Winnie replied, "except what I wrote you. It all happened so suddenly. Father had gone to the station to meet mother. She had been away only a few days, but long enough to make us

lonely. What a dainty supper I had ready for her! Flossie was at school in Pictou and I was all alone in the house. Oh, Edith, I shall never forget as long as I live the terrible dread that took hold of me when I saw mother's face. It was so white, and wrinkled with pain. I flew out to her. They helped her gently out and she tried to smile as she said, 'Winnie, dear, it's nothing much, only a fall.' But the sharp pain made her hold her breath."

The tears were shining in Winnie's eyes as she continued, "I can hardly tell you the rest, dear. When the doctor examined her he found that the trouble was in her back, something with the spine. We have the best specialist we could get, but I can tell, although they try to make us think otherwise, that they hold out very little hope for darling mother."

"Do not talk any more about it, Winnie," Edith interrupted. "I feel sure that some one can be found who will know how to make her better. You have had too much of a strain on your nerves, dear, and now I am to be nurse and Flossie can go back to school. You will have a little rest, and I am just longing to be able to wait on your dear mother."

"Edith, you are more than kind, but you must not do that. Of course, we are anxious for Flossie to pass this year. She only has a

month longer, and I don't see why she cannot go back now since you are here."

"I could not put my heart into study," interrupted Flossie, "when mother is so ill."

"But, dear, you must try," Winnie answered kindly.

"Mother talked and planned so much about our visit, Edith," she continued, "before this awful accident, and since then she keeps asking every day when you are coming. She seemed so pleased to day when I told her you were coming this afternoon."

Flossie kept very silent during the ride; she felt that Edith was a stranger, it seemed so long to her since she had left them; while to Winnie it seemed but a short time, although Edith had grown wonderfully. But it was not long before she felt that Edith's sweet smile and sunny disposition would be a blessing to them all.

"There is the house, I know it!" exclaimed Edith as they caught sight of it through the trees. "I just feel as if I were coming home instead of getting farther away. Oh, I see Mr. McCullugh!" and Edith waved her hand to the figure in the distance.

William McCullugh was like a man lost. His whole life was centred in his sweet little wife, and now that this terrible thing had happened and the dear, true woman who had

given up so much for him, borne so many hardships without a murmur, who always cheered and helped him when the "skein of life" seemed tangled, and who was in truth his "guardian angel," when he realized that she had been suddenly stricken down, suffering and helpless, his heart was well-nigh breaking. The man who stretched out his hand to [illegible] seemed a stranger to the man who used to be William McCullugh. He was so different from the big, jolly man of olden days. Grief had left its mark, and a sad mark it was. Edith's tender heart was full of sympathy for the lonely man.

"We're glad you have come," he said kindly. "You're not a bit changed, just the same brown eyes and happy face. Well, I'm hoping you'll be able to cheer and help my wife. Winnie has been doing too much altogether. Oh, well, I guess mother will be anxious to see you. Mind and don't get her excited."

Upstairs, in the dainty little room that was assigned to her, Edith removed her cloak and insisted upon putting on a big white apron she brought in her little suit-case.

"Now, you see, dear, I am to be the new assistant nurse, and I want to enter upon my duties right away."

"Edith, dear," and poor tired Winnie

threw her arms around her friend's neck, "you cannot know how we all love you, and you are just going to be the greatest blessing to us. You will wonder, perhaps, why we have no trained nurse, but mother would not have one; she wanted us alone, and we wanted to wait on her. We have a good maid in the kitchen, but she never attends to mother. Now, dear, you and I will take it in turns. Dr. Bourne said he thought I would do nicely as a nurse," and a faint blush spread over her cheeks, "and I have been trying to do my best."

"And you make just the dearest nurse under the sun," broke in Edith.

"Some one has to be with mother night and day," explained Winnie.

"We will just manage admirably, you and I," answered Edith, as they quietly entered Mrs. McCullugh's room.

Flossie had stolen up to her mother before and was now by the bed rearranging the pillows. When Mrs. McCullugh heard the door open she tried to raise her head.

"No, mother, don't," interrupted Flossie. "Edith is right here."

"My dear Mrs. McCullugh," and Edith had one of the sufferer's small white hands in hers as she stooped over her and kissed the sweet face.

"You see," she said softly, "I am Winnie's new assistant, and how I shall just love being with you!"

"Dear child," and the weary eyes gazed lovingly on Edith.

"You will be assistant angel then, for Winnie and Flossie have been real angels."

"Hush, mother, you are the only angel," interrupted Winnie.

"But, Edith, my child, you will need a long rest after your weary journey."

"No, indeed, Mrs. McCullugh, I am not one bit tired, and I want to get my instructions from the doctor when he comes. In fact I think I will send Winnie to bed—after awhile—and Flossie and I will stay with you," Edith said cheerfully.

"Arrange it as you will, dears. I am feeling considerably better since the doctor's visit this morning."

"I think I hear him now," exclaimed Winie, as she left the room. Edith heard her name called in a few moments as the door opened and Winnie beckoned to her.

"He is just coming up, Edith," she said, "and I want you to meet him before he goes in to see mother."

Winnie's eyes shone with "a new light" as she quietly greeted Dr. Bourne, a fine, handsome young man with kindly eyes and

gentle manner. Edith could not help noticing the tender look he bestowed on Winnie.

"Edith, this is Dr. Bourne." Then turning to him she said, "This is my friend, Edith Grey, whose name you have so often heard us mention."

"Yes," chimed in Edith brightly, as they shook hands, "I am to be Winnie's assistant nurse, that is, if you think I can do."

"I am sure you will do admirably, Miss Grey. I have heard so much about you from Winnie and Mrs. McCullugh that we will not be strangers."

"How is our patient?" he asked, turning towards Winnie.

"I have tried to be very particular about it," Winnie said in some embarrassment as she handed him her "chart." "Mother seems much brighter and easier since you were here this morning."

"You see I have a trained nurse in charge," Dr. Bourne said to Edith, as he glanced over the chart. "That is more encouraging," he remarked on handing it back to Winnie.

He seemed much pleased after examining his patient, and gave instructions to the girls to keep on with the same treatment. When he was leaving he whispered to Winnie that he hoped to have some good news for them in

a short time. As she followed him out of the room she questioned eagerly:

"Tell me, Dr. Bourne, tell me truly, if you think this new treatment will help mother much?"

"Now, nurses mus' not be impatient," he answered, kindly, and there was a thoughtful tone in his voice as he continued. "Despite what the specialists say, I am becoming more and more hopeful every day, Winnie, and there is nothing in this world that would give me more pleasure than to be able to assure you positively that in such a time your dear mother would be her old self again. Time will tell, little woman, and in the meantime keep a brave heart, for brightness will do much in easing the sufferings of your mother. Have you heard from Charlie?" he added, quickly.

"Not since last Friday, when he said that in a week's time he would be on his way to New York as he had some important business there."

"Oh, yes, yes," answered Dr. Bourne. "Now I am off. I'll not come to-morrow until afternoon."

Winnie watched him from the window speak to her father for a moment, then jump into his gig, and off.

A smile lurked in her lovely eyes. It was

not a smil . mirth, but a smile was in her heart, and 'twas the reflection it cast.

"Oh!" she sighed, as she turned to enter the sick room again, "if you, Clyde Bourne, could only make mother well, how—I—we—would all love you."

CHAPTER XIX.

AN ANGEL OF MERCY.

"A doctor's face is like a closed book, is it not?" questioned Winnie of Edith, as, later on in the evening Mrs. McCullugh was quietly resting and the girls had left the room for a moment. Edith was trying to persuade Winnie to go to bed and allow her to remain up the first part of the night at least.

"I suppose it is, to a certain extent," answered Edith, "but I thought from Dr. Bourne's face that he was pleased with your mother's progress; however, dear, that has nothing to do with your going to bed now."

"I know, but my mind is so full of mother that I doubt if I can sleep."

"I know Dr. Bourne is doing his best for your mother, and leave the rest in the hands of Him who rules the universe. Be assured that He will cause your dear mother's health to be restored. You must just try to forget everything for awhile and have a good sleep."

"But, Edith, do you think you fully understand about the medicine?"

"Yes, you have written it all down for me so that I will be doubly sure, and I think, from

appearances, that your mother will have an easy night."

"Oh, but, dear, I have so much to tell you that I would much rather talk than sleep."

"No; you will do nothing of the kind. I will not listen to a word. Here, I am going to give you one of these sleeping powders to make you sleep. One will not hurt you, and if they are good for your mother they will be good for you."

Complete weariness had overtaken Winnie and she did not object to the powder, as Edith expected she would. Loss of sleep for so many nights was telling very quickly on the girl. Somehow she had confidence in Edith, the girl who, after five years' absence, came back to them, and in such a short time made them feel as if she had never been away. She was so kind, so sympathetic, and thoughtful. As Winnie closed her eyes and waited for the "spirit of sleep" to enter she thanked God for sending Edith to them in this their greatest time of need. She did hope that Edith would not forget the medicine. What a lovely girl she was! She wondered what business Charlie had in New York. What a fine doctor Clyde Bourne was! And with a vision of Clyde Bourne bending over her mother, assuring her that she would be completely cured, Winnie gave herself up to the "spirit

of sleep," which carried her off—off to the land of dreams.

As Edith kept her watch in the sick room Mr. McCullugh gently opened the door and beckoned her out to the hall. At supper he had remonstrated with her about sitting up, for he felt that it was too much for Edith to undertake the first night.

"You must run off to bed," he said, kindly, "and let me take your place. I feel that this is too much altogether. I'll sit up, I don't mind it, you know. I sat up last night and I can do it again to-night."

"No, no, Mr. McCullugh. Winnie was telling me that since you have this new dairy company to manage you have to leave for town very early in the morning, so you will need your rest to-night. If I felt tired or sleepy I would tell you, but I slept splendidly on the train, and I am not one bit weary. You will have many nights to sit up, but, indeed," she added quickly, seeing the mistake she had made, "I hope Mrs. McCullugh will get better so rapidly that——"

"Yes, yes," he interrupted, "I know what you want to say. Well, you're a fine lass. Have your way for to-night. Something is making the wife rest well, for she has not had such a sleep for many a day."

"Don't worry about anything, Mr. McCullugh. Trust me for to-night."

When the house was quiet and Edith settled down to watch all night she felt the task would be harder than she at first imagined. She began to feel tired, and, oh, so sleepy! If only Mrs. McCullugh would waken up, and she could give her the medicine. It was time now, but she did not care to disturb her, for perhaps the long-needed sleep would do more good than the drug. It seemed an hour since she had looked at the little watch, and it was really only ten minutes. At last her eyes rested on a book lying on the little table in the far corner of the room. She tip-toed softly over, picked it up, and returned to the low rocker. Probably it belonged to Charlie, for it was a book on violin playing. She began to wonder why he was away, just when they needed him most. What was he doing? He must have made some money some way, for surely that was a new buggy they had, and a dear little pony. Then the house, it was changed so! Everything was so pretty. In the dining-room she was sure that all the chairs were new, and there seemed to be a great many new things all over the house. Probably it had all been done with Charlie's money. She remembered that he had always been generous. She wondered if he looked

the same. What fun they used to have together!

Was that Mrs. McCullugh stirring? No, she was quiet again. What a lovely sleep she was having! Oh, how she wished she would get better, the dear little woman, so patient, so true and loving! Her mother and Ronald would be lonely for her to night, she must not forget to write them to-morrow. She should have sent them a card from the station; and Gerald, this was the night that he was to sing at the recital. It would be over now, and he would be thinking of her. How splendid he was, but she was sorry that they had not told her mother; however, as soon as Mrs. McCullugh got a little better she would write a long letter telling her everything.

She was interrupted in her reverie by a low moaning. She moved quickly to the bed. Mrs. McCullugh was trying to turn to a more comfortable position. Edith had not thought of this, but the little woman was so light it would be an easy matter.

"Lie perfectly still, dear Mrs. McCullugh. I will fix you," and she carefully and gently made her comfortable.

"You are a sweet girl," Mrs. McCullugh said. "I have had a sleep, have I not?"

"Yes, dear, and now you are to take this medicine."

"I don't know when I had such a sleep, dear, and it does my heart good to see your sweet face again. We all loved you when you were amongst us, and now I know that we will continue to love you always."

Edith had moved to the little table, bringing back in her hand a green glass vase filled with fresh, fragrant violets.

"Are they not the essence of sweetness?" she asked, as she held them up in the light. "The doctor brought them."

"They are lovely, the sweetest flower that grows. Dr. Bourne is very kind."

"Now, dear," Edith asked, after she had returned the violets to the table, "are you sure you are comfortable? Is there anything else you would like me to do?"

"No, thank you, Edith. The pain does not seem to be quite as sharp to-night. And I am so thankful," she added.

"Well, you will take another little powder now," Edith said, as she turned the lights low.

"You are so kind," Mrs. McCullugh murmured, and ere long the even breathing told Edith that her patient was asleep again.

She wakened frequently after that, but Edith was always quick to minister to her wants. The hours wore on. Many times during the night Edith heard slippered foot-

steps in the hall, pause at the door a moment, and then return. She knew that poor Mr. McCullugh's heart was heavy and sore; he could not rest. It was not long, however, before the morning sun began to rise in the far east, show its smiling face above the heights, and come marching on, turning the dark night into glorious morn.

CHAPTER XX.

THE NEW PHYSICIAN.

In this way Edith began her visit with the McCullughs. She was untiring in her efforts to help, and kindness itself in everything she did. Mr. McCullugh soon began to think that, next to Winnie, Edith was the finest girl he ever knew.

Flossie was back again at school, so that Edith spent most of her time in the sick-room. Between attending to the house and relieving Edith, Winnie's hands were full. One morning, about ten days after Edith's arrival, Dr. Bourne came quite early and gave some hurried directions to Winnie and Edith, saying that he would be back in the afternoon and that he was bringing a friend with him.

"Oh, just a friend of mine who happens to be here now, but don't tell your mother," he added to Winnie, "in case she might become nervous, and she has been progressing so very favorably of late."

He knew he dare not tell Winnie the truth: that Charlie had sent a specialist from New York and that he was the "friend." She would be so delighted that he knew she could not keep the news from the patient, and any

extra excitement whatever might prove disastrous.

Dr. Bourne had a long talk with Mr. McCullugh, for he had been let into the secret. Just before he left Edith ran to the door and, motioning him into the porch, she questioned eagerly, "Please do tell me, doctor, what is going to happen. I am quick at guessing and think I know already."

"Well, listen, now mum's the word, remember," he said, with a smile. "Not a word to Winnie or your patient. Charlie has been fortunate enough to secure the best specialist in New York. He arrived this morning and is coming out with me this afternoon, and, Miss Grey, let us pray that he may be able to put gladness into our hearts."

"Oh, isn't that splendid! You can trust me," she cried, as she hurried back to carry out the instructions he had given her.

The morning dragged for Edith; she thought the afternoon would never come. Mrs. McCullugh seemed easy until shortly after lunch, when she became more restless.

"Winnie, dear," she asked, as Winnie was administering some medicine, "when is Charlie coming home? I miss him so much."

"Very soon, mother," answered Winnie, gently.

"Why is he away so long?" her mother

continued. "When he went away he said it would only be a few days before his return, and now over two weeks have gone by."

"Yes, but mother, he had quite a lot of business to do about this new mine, but we expect him back any day now. Don't worry, mother, he is all right. He writes so often, and I send him word of you every day."

"Yes, but he never says much about what he is doing."

"Now, mother, do try not to excite yourself. Perhaps we will hear from him to-day telling us when to expect him home."

Edith had entered the room a moment before, and, perceiving how restless Mrs. McCullugh was, she felt that perhaps the excited state she herself was in had something to do with the nervousness of her patient. She calmed the tumult in her own heart as best she could.

"Let me rub your head, dear Mrs. McCullugh," she said as she proceeded to run her soft fingers over the little woman's brow; somehow this action always had a soothing effect. How thankful she felt when, after a few moments, she saw that the sufferer was apparently easy again!

When the specialist came from Halifax, just a week after the accident happened, Mrs. McCullugh was full of hope and cheer. When

he offered no encouragement her spirits fell, but she was not wholly discouraged until after the visit of two others. She could plainly see from their actions that they held out no more hope than the first. The brave little spirit did not, even then, show its sorrow and sadness to those around.

When the burden and pain seemed more than she could bear she would pour out her heart in prayer to the dear loving Father who alone knew the anguish of her soul; and often, after she had thus unburdened her heart, a sense of great peace and quiet would come over her; the angel of love and promise would fill her heart with a new hope, for "the Lord healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

When the doctor arrived with the New York specialist, a short little man with shrewd, kindly eyes and a quick, precise manner, who seemed to take in everything in a single glance, Edith liked him at once, and felt that he was possessed with more than ordinary skill. Winnie was much excited when Dr. Bourne told her just who the new doctor was; but Edith, now that the hour had come, felt herself growing calmer every moment, and oh, how she did trust that this man had great skill and wisdom!

When Mrs. McCullugh saw the stranger

with Dr. Bourne she knew at once who he was. Something told her that he was another specialist, and that that was what had delayed Charlie. With a little prayer on her lips she quieted the nervous dread in her heart, and Dr. Bourne was delighted with her apparent calmness.

The next hour was a most anxious time for everyone, but more especially for those outside of the sick room, as only the two doctors were with the patient.

The seconds seemed minutes, and the minutes hours. Winnie did nothing but pace up and down the room; her face seemed drawn; and Edith could only imagine what an awful struggle was going on within the daughter's tender heart. She could say nothing much to comfort her, but with quiet sympathy and love she endeavored to ease her fears.

There was still a darker, more anxious hour to come, when their hearts would be torn with fear and anxiety.

Mr. McCullugh made his way out to the fields after the doctors came, but found himself returning, to linger around the house. Then he would retrace his steps to where the men were working, but his restless, anxious spirit would give him no rest if he was not on hand to hear what the new physician had to

say: if he would indeed prove himself to be a "physician," a healer of the sick.

As he sat on the steps at the back door and waited, life presented a sad picture to him: he could only see the black night, the sun had not risen for him since his sweet little wife had been so suddenly stricken down. The little woman who had given up all for him, who had never complained when the way was rough and the hard pebbles hurt her feet. Oh, why was she the one to suffer? Now, when life was getting a little easier, things seemed to be improving during the last few years, and it was in their power to make up a little for all she had borne for them. It seemed too hard and unjust. He forgot that "those whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and sometimes our faith and trust has to be very strong indeed to be able to leave it all in God's hands, knowing that He in His own great wisdom knows what is best for us better than we do ourselves.

So honest William McCullugh's heart was sore indeed, but the sorrow was not to be for long, for "joy cometh in the morning."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE VALLEY, THE SHADOW, AND THE SUNSHINE.

At last Dr. Bourne came into the little sitting-room where Edith and Winnie were. William McCullugh had joined them a moment before. A question was on every lip, but Clyde Bourne gave no one time to utter it. Going right to the point, he said,

"At last I think I have good news for you. Dr. Fraser is still with your mother, but he is very hopeful. Now I must leave you for a moment again, and Miss Edith," he continued, coming over to where Edith was standing, "I would like you to stay with Mrs. McCullugh when the doctor comes out, not," he added, as he followed her into the hall, "because I do not want you to know everything, but because some one must be with her, and Winnie is not the one, for she will not rest until she knows exactly what Dr. Fraser says. I will explain the whole case to you afterwards."

Just then the specialist came out, and without noticing Edith he followed Dr. Bourne into the sitting-room.

Edith found Mrs. McCullugh looking very weary and tired, but there was a new light in her eyes, a light of hope.

"Dear, just try and rest now, for you have had a trying hour, I am sure," said Edith, as she took a seat beside the sufferer's bed and held one of the frail hands in her strong, soft ones.

"Yes, I will just rest and be quiet for awhile, Edith, dear." The little woman's voice sounded tired and weary. "And I will just thank God for all His loving kindness to me," she added, gently. After a moment she said, almost in a whisper, "When the doctors go, dear, I would like to see William alone; you won't forget, will you, Edith?"

"I will tell him as soon as they go, Mrs. McCullugh," Edith replied quickly, "and I think that will be soon, for I hear a movement in the hall now."

But it was some time before the doctors left. They had much to say and to discuss with the father and daughter. Dr. Fraser held out great hope for the patient's complete recovery, but only through the result of an operation. That operation would be a most critical one, one that would not only tax the strength of the patient to its utmost but would require great skill in performing. The specialist felt quite sure that everything would be successful. In any event it was the one chance; if it was not done, instead of getting better poor Mrs. McCullugh would be

-ome rapidly worse and the end would not be far off. William McCullugh watched closely the great man as he laid the issue before them, and he felt confidence in him. He spoke as a man who understood exactly what he was saying, and with an honesty and sympathy which went right to their hearts. He told them the operation meant the saving of a life, and that life the cherished, beloved one of the wife and mother. He need not have appealed to them on that score, for their loving hearts were only too willing to agree to anything that they were sure would help the loved one.

Mrs. McCullugh had readily given her consent to submit to the operation and it now remained only to get the sanction of the household, and before long that was given too.

The time for the operation was set for two days hence. They would need a trained nurse for a short time, but as soon as Mrs. McCullugh was well on the way to recovery her services could be dispensed with.

Dr. Bourne took the responsibility of attending to all necessary arrangements. The specialist was to be in almost constant attendance, as considerable treatment was necessary in order that the operation might be perfectly successful.

The hours flew for the busy workers, but

how they dragged for poor Mrs. McCullugh. Her nervousness, which, try as she would, she could not help feeling, seemed to irritate her suffering. The pain grew more and more intense, until at times it seemed more than she could bear. She would just close her eyes and suffer in silence what agonies no one knew but herself. How she longed for the time to come when her life would hang in the balance, and how she prayed to be restored to health, but never in the most trying hours of suffering did she murmur or complain. A spirit such as hers was rare indeed.

All along the pathway she had given so much to her loving Father's care and keeping, and she had trusted Him so implicitly in everything, that now she could not murmur. At times she could not understand, but she was content to wait patiently until God in His own good time would roll back the dark clouds and she would see that in all things "God had been good." Hers was a nature that privation and hard times, instead of embittering and saddening, had only sweetened and refined until her brave, trusting spirit shone like a bright star in a darkening sky. Simple faith and trust in God and whole hearted love and devotion to her husband and family comprised the secret of her life. How she was loved and honored, not only by her

family, but by every one who knew her, was manifested in the many acts of kindness shown them since her illness.

The morning of the eventful day arrived, and everyone marvelled at the great calmness of the patient. She had given the day and the hour into her heavenly Father's keeping, trusting Him and knowing that His way is best.

They had received a telegram the day before to meet Charlie at the train in the morning, but as the time was nearing that some one should go no one seemed to be ready.

William McCullugh hung about the house like a restless spirit. He was waiting for the nurse to tell him that he could see his "little wife" for a moment alone. He longed to hold her hands in his and whisper sweet words of cheer into her listening ear, telling her that "all would be well." Since the specialist had brought the nurse no one had been allowed into the sick room except occasionally Winnie or Edith to assist. His heart was hungering for a long look into the sweet, patient face that had been his guiding star for so many years.

"Father, could you not meet Charlie?" Winnie asked him as she suddenly realized that the train would be due within half an

hour, and it took that long to drive to the station.

"No," answered her father crossly. "Let one of the men go."

"There is no one around, father. I forgot to tell them. They are all in the field, and I don't see how I can go," pleaded Winnie.

"Let him walk, then," answered her father.

He was plainly not himself to day, so Winnie said no more. She found Edith upstairs busy preparing some bandages.

"Let me do this, Edith," she said, earnestly, "and please, like a dear good girl, meet Charlie. Father won't go, and I can't. I am so nervous I couldn't drive straight. I'll run down and harness Ned if you will go. Please do."

"Very well," Edith answered quickly, "I will go, but be careful about these, Winnie. Be sure to make them big enough."

Winnie didn't hear her. She was away like a flash and in a few moments Edith was off down the road to the station. She would much rather have stayed, but she knew that there was no use in refusing, for no one else could tear themselves away from the house.

The train was just pulling up to the short, narrow platform when Edith drove into sight. Charlie alighted quickly and walked towards her. One glance and his heart leaped for

joy, 'twas Edith. He had looked forward to this meeting, but he had pictured her "an angel of mercy" in the sick room, with her sweet smile and willing hands making life easier for his dear mother. He was rather disappointed at seeing her now, but of course that was selfish of him, for no doubt Edith had been confined indoors so much that the little outing would do her good, nevertheless the look in his eyes as he greeted her was not one of disappointment.

"Edith, is it really you?"

"Yes, really me," Edith said gaily. "And is it really you, Charlie?"

"I think so. Yes, I am all here to-day. When I am away from mother I am not so sure. I leave a big part of myself in her room."

"Yes, and she is thinking continually of you."

"How does she seem to be taking it?"

"Wonderfully! She is a marvel to everyone. No one would think her the least bit nervous, but, of course, since this nurse arrived I have not been in the room so much."

"Oh, I did not know there was a nurse."

"Yes, the doctors both said that one was absolutely necessary, some disinterested person to help at the critical moment, and some one who understands just what to do."

"How is father; does he seem to be nervous?"

"He just does nothing but roam through the house from one room to the other, speaking to no one."

"Poor father; and Winnie?"

"Winnie is an angel, Charlie. I never saw anything like her untiring devotion, but she begged me to meet you to day as no one could tear themselves away from the house and I had to come."

"Edith," Charlie said very gravely, "I am sure we will never be able to repay you for all your kindness. I can find no words with which to tell you how much we appreciate it."

"Oh, nonsense, Charlie. I just love to be able to be with your dear mother. She has always been just like a mother to me."

If Edith could have seen the smile that came into his eyes when she said this she would have wondered, but she was busy urging the horse on, she was so anxious to get back.

"What do you think of the specialist?" Charlie asked after a few moments.

"He is simply fine. I am sure he understands what he is doing; even your father seems to have confidence in him."

"He is recognized as a leading authority

cases of that kind and has secured for
self, by continual success, a great reputa
on."

"I am sure everything will be all right, but
cannot help feeling anxious until it is
er," said Edith sadly.

Shortly after Edith left for the station the
rse called Mr. McCullugh up to the sick
om, and for a few moments he was alone
th his wife. Love had guided them through
e first trying years of their life together.
ove had remained with them when every-
ng else seemed to go, and it still filled their
arts, and now since this trying hour had
ome upon them it seemed to grow stronger
d stronger with every fleeting moment, and
William McCullugh felt that his "little wife"
s more precious to him to-day than ever
ore.

The sufferer's face brightened as he laid
s large, hard, rough hands on hers; hard
th honest toil and rough with exposure to
and wind.

"You're a fine dear little woman," he
ispered, and a tear shone in the corner of
s eye. It lingered there a moment and
hen dropped on to the small, white hand.

"You're not worrying for me, William,"
e sweet voice said; "I am in my Father's

keeping, and all will be well. Do not be so sad, dear."

"Oh, Elsie," and there was a quiver in his voice as he breathed her name. "You're more precious to me now than the day we were wed. Surely God will be good and give you back to me again, well and strong."

"Hush, William, dear, God knows best, and somehow I feel that after this I will be better than ever before; but, my dear husband," and she drew his head down until his cheek rested on hers, "if our Father decides otherwise do not worry for me: I would not altogether leave you, for I would be ever near you and waiting for you."

"Don't, mother, don't!" the strong man moaned," 'twould be more than I could bear to lose you now. No! No! Oh, my God, not that!" and then, suddenly realizing that this was not right for the little woman who should be calm and composed, he murmured, "but forgive me, dear wife," as he lifted his head and tried to calm his thoughts.

"I know you're just going to come out of this splendidly. After a few weeks, when you can go out driving, we will go over to Sandy's Nook and have a good look at the sea."

"Ah, yes, William, that we will."

There was a gentle rap on the door and

the big man's eyes filled with tears as he bent over and gently kissed the quivering lips. Turning quickly he walked out of the room, to spend the next few hours in the agony of waiting. He would try and work in the garden, for in working the time might not drag so. As he was leaving the house Edith and Charlie drove up.

"All right," he called, as Charlie helped Edith down, "I'll put the horse in. You run up and see Winnie."

The doctor arrived shortly after, and before long there was only one prayer in the hearts of the anxious waiters; that all would be well.

The house was clothed in awful stillness. Edith tried to busy herself in her own room, while she left Winnie and Charlie alone. From time to time the soft tread of the doctors and nurse could be heard, and the low, irregular moaning of the loved one; but the bright sunlight poured in through the open window, giving promise of better things, and a robin chirped steadily on in the treetop singing its song of spring.

William McCullugh did not see the robin, nor yet did he hear its song, and he did not notice how bright the sun was shining, for his heart was down in the valley and the high mountains hid the sunlight. He thought life

was hard and bitter and God was not a God of love, for how could He be when He had allowed his sweet little wife to be laid low on a bed of suffering? After so many years of struggle and hard times, and through it all never complaining, that this should be the end, and especially now when it was in their power to make the path easier for her! Oh, God, it was hard! His sight could not pierce the darkness. He could not see that God was even then drawing back the cloud to reveal Himself in all His wonderous glory, and when the sun shone again He would be nearer and dearer to him than ever before.

Life for some seems an easy road, and for some a flower-strewn path, and yet for some 'tis a bubble of mirth, empty, but for the rainbow lining. For others it is a tangled skein, impossible to unravel, and the more they try the more tangled it becomes, little knowing that the Saviour Himself is standing near, waiting to help if they would but look up and see.

It was over. Everything had been most successful; the specialist was more than pleased, and assured them that their dear mother would be well and strong again within a very short time. Hope and thankfulness filled their hearts, and there was not a cloud in the sky.

The twilight shadows found William McCullugh in his room on his knees, with his head bent low, for God had rolled back the dark cloud, had showed him the sunlight, and the strong man felt very humble indeed. His heart was full of praise and gratitude to the loving Father, but he was ashamed to lift his head, for doubt and unbelief had once filled his soul.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LADY OF HIS DREAMS.

"What are you trying to do, Edith?"

Edith had taken Flash, the little pony the family used for driving, out of the stable and was trying to harness her to the buggy. As she looked up and saw Charlie standing be side her she laughed merrily.

"Why, just trying to harness this frisky little animal, but as I never harnessed a horse before it may not be right."

When Charlie looked at the straps and saw that they were "everyway," he laughed too.

"Well, young lady, you would have had a runaway for sure if you had ventured off like this, but I am your guardian angel, you see, sent to save you from an awful fate," and there was a merry twinkle in his blue eyes.

"All you need are your wings, Charlie, to make you look your part," Edith retorted gaily. "But you have not fixed the straps; won't you, please?"

"That all depends upon where you are go ing," Charlie answered mischievously.

"Well, I asked permission of your father before he left this morning to have the pony,

nd he said I could if I would harness her myself."

"Well, seeing that you have not carried out the agreement, I am afraid that I shall have to——"

"Now, Charlie, you know I tried my best, didn't I?" and then quickly changing her mood, she continued, saucily, "But, young man, if you will not be obliging I shall walk," and she accordingly started to walk down the lane.

Charlie watched her for a moment. What a bright picture she made as the June sun covered her head with shining gold and the warm breeze played with her curly locks. His heart was full of sunshine this morning, for life was very sweet just now. His darling mother was so much better that yesterday the doctor allowed her to sit in the big armchair for a little while, and very soon she would be able to walk again. Everyone was happy and light-hearted. Joy had entered the home once more and closed was the door to care and sorrow.

Then, Edith was with them. The girl he had loved when she was little more than a child: how much more he loved her now. There had never been any other for him. She was the "maiden of his dreams." He had never felt that she would be his, for her

world was not his world, and she was so beautiful, so sweet, so clever, that—oh, 'twould be presumption to ever think that she could care for him in any way but as a friend; but no one knew how much he prized her friendship, and lately, since the "little mother" was getting so well, his one thought had been "Edith." When he was not near her, listening to her sweet voice and merry laughter, he was thinking of her, and often when he was alone he would take up his violin and pour into its listening ear all the secrets of his soul.

As she neared the gate and shyly turned her head to see if he were looking, the mad desire came to him to catch her up in his arms and—but he must never, by word or deed, reveal his heart to her to cause her pain.

She was apparently trying to open the gate.

"Let me open it for you," he said as he walked towards her.

"It is a fearfully hard gate to open," Edith answered, smiling. "Charlie, won't you harness the horse for me?" she coaxed, suddenly smiling up at him.

"No. Do you think I would do anything to cause you to break your 'sacred word' to my trusting father? Why, Edith, I am surprised that you would ask me to do anything so base and wicked," Charlie burst forth in apparent indignation.

Edith laughed heartily at this. "Twas rely anyone saw the humorous side of arlie, but he was a jolly companion to-day. en Charlie laughed a free-hearted, merry gh. In a moment he said,

"But, Edith, I have a plan which I think uld be nicer than driving. You know the o horses I brought home the other day: hey are splendid saddle horses. Let us ride herever you wish to go."

"I have not been down to the sea yet," dith answered, "and your mother told me at she did not want me, and commanded me go out somewhere, and when Mr. Johnson lled yesterday enquiring after your other's health he asked me to please go and him soon, so I just thought I would call ere to-day, and then go straight to the dear d ocean. But riding would be lovely. How ood of you to think of it! I will be out again a a moment." And Edith danced into the ouse.

When she came out again arrayed in her imple riding habit Charlie did not dare look t her long. She was dangerously near, as he put her foot into his hand and then orang lightly into the saddle.

"You are sure I can manage this animal?" he asked as Charlie opened the gate.

"I think so, that is if you can ride as well

as I think you can," he answered as he mounted his steed.

"Oh, Charlie, let me down!" Edith exclaimed suddenly. "I have forgotten my letters and I must post them at the office."

"Never mind, I'll get them. Where are they?"

"They are just on the kitchen table. I left them there until I should get the horse harnessed."

"They will be there, then, for you have not harnessed the horse yet," Charlie answered gaily. "You are a great little letter writer. I thought I posted letters for you yesterday," he called.

"Mr. Gerald Warren." There it was, the top letter.

"Oh, heavens!" thought Charlie, "surely he is not her lover. Was it not yesterday that one of the letters was addressed to him?"

He suddenly felt a weight on his heart and a sad look came into his eyes, but when he handed Edith the letters he was smiling.

"You haven't forgotten anything else," he asked.

"No, only to kiss your mother good-bye."

"Well," Charlie answered, quite seriously, "I am afraid I could not do that for you. It would not be the same."

"Oh, well," Edith laughingly answered, "I

will give her two when I come back. Let us go off."

"It seems to me," Edith said when they had ridden some distance, "that you have the nicer pony. Isn't he a beauty? His coat just shines in the sunlight. Will you please let me ride him home?"

"I am afraid, Edith, that this little 'Black Beauty' is far too wild for you. I would," he added, quickly noticing the offended look in her eyes, "but it wouldn't be safe. He plays all sorts of little tricks, and sometimes I can hardly manage him."

But there and then impulsive Edith decided to have a ride on Black Beauty someway and somehow.

"You know," Edith was saying as they neared Mr. Johnson's little farm-house, "Mr. Johnson wants to hear all about Roy."

"That will be nice, and I believe Roy is very clever, and no doubt a great friend of yours," Charlie responded without looking at her.

"Yes, he is very clever," said Edith, thoughtfully. She was thinking of what she would say to Mr. Johnson about Roy.

"And he must be rather a handsome fellow now," Charlie continued, looking hard at Edith.

Edith was gazing all around on the old

familiar place, thinking how lonely it must be for the old man since his wife had died and his only son away playing the "prodigal son."

"Yes, he is handsome," Edith answered, absently. She did not notice the puzzled look in Charlie's eyes.

"Surely," he was thinking, "she does not like Roy," and yet how quiet she became when his name was mentioned.

True love is not blind, but has been eyes open, and Charlie was becoming quite sensitive. As he lifted her down at the door and took a hasty glance into her eyes, he did not think it was "love" he saw there, but rather a worried look.

They knocked at the front door; getting no answer, they went to the back, and soon old Sandy Johnson greeted them.

"Ah, noo, this is real nice to see your bonnie face so soon," giving Edith's hand a good shake.

"Weel, you're a braw lassie. I am glad you're here. Sit doon in this chair. It's noo very fine, but I'm thinking you're noo proud. Are ye, noo?" and the old man, after placing an old scratched chair for Edith, proceeded to seat himself on another one of the same order when he noticed Charlie.

"Ah, me boy, sit ye doon here."

"No, Mr. Johnson, I will watch the horses. They are rather frisky," said Charlie.

"You must be rather lonely here, Mr. Johnson," Edith said. "It is too bad that Roy is not coming home this summer."

"Ah, weel, I'm noo lonely very much, but often when the sun ow'er yonder goes down I begin to feel rather alone like; but ah, lassie, I'm never alone when our heavenly Father is near," and Sandy Johnson's thin, long face took on a pious expression.

He had a hard face. Close; no one could ever gain information from Sandy, but he would arm all his forces to draw what he could from you.

His wife died the year before Roy went to college. She had never lost a penny in her life. She never had anything very nice to say about anyone, and always, if there was anything "shady" about anyone or anything, she knew it, and before long others knew it too. So that, added to Sandy's miserly nature, his wife's influence did not tend to improve him. He had been a hard-working man in his day, and at one time had one of the best farms in the country. He had always been a big man in the "kirk," that is, he attended all the meetings and knew exactly what every member of the kirk contributed to the minister's salary. Sandy was in the

habit of making little trips into a neighboring town once or twice a week, on business, and he always happened to be away when the collectors for missions called, or the church treasurer. In fact, he was not on very friendly terms with the church treasurer. "There was something he didna like aboot the man," he was wont to say.

His wife, when she was living, as soon as she discovered who the callers were from her place behind the parlor curtains, would immediately discover that it was time to skim the cream off the milk for the churning. The pans were in the cellar, so that no one would be home at the Johnson farm.

But Sandy Johnson was always—on the next Sabbath, when he would meet the collectors—"Veery, veery sorry indade, but he'd make it all right with them soon, veery soon." Years of waiting had failed to discover just what was meant by Sandy's "veery soon." It could not be taken literally, however.

"Weel, I suppose you hae a great mony fine things to tell me aboot my boy Roy," Sandy continued, giving Edith a broad grin.

"Yes, Mr. Johnson," Edith answered, rather hesitatingly. "He is a very clever boy, indeed."

"And I suppose," he continued, "you'll be

reat friends, you two?" turning a sly glance n Edith.

"He sometimes comes to see us. But it is pity," she answered, wishing to change the ubject, "that he is not coming home this ummer."

Sandy evidently misunderstanding her meaning, and thinking she missed Roy, said, very sweetly, "Ah, but, lassie, 'tis noo veery ang, the summer."

"Oh, I was not thinking of that, Mr. John son," replied Edith, rather crossly. She was becoming annoyed at the old man's stupidity.

Charlie was quick to notice her irritation and suddenly cried out, "Stand still there, Beauty," and disappeared out of the door.

On returning he looked at Edith and then said, "I'm afraid we will have to go, Edith, the horses are becoming so restless."

"Oh, yes," answered Edith, "and we have two other calls to make."

"Now weal, weal," said the old man, "and I have had noo chance to enquire regarding your mother and brother. I wanted to ask you so much," he continued. "But ye must come over again, and we can hae a right good chat. Yon's a fine man," pointing to Charlie untying the horses, "and he's turning out to be a miner, I'm hearin.' But I suppose you know naething aboot it," he added, giving her

a hard look. "Veesitors don't generally, you know."

"No, I decidedly do not, Mr. Johnson," Edith retorted, impatiently.

"Come again," he called as they rode down the lane.

"What an old hypocrite," Edith said when they were out of hearing.

"Everyone around here knows Sandy Johnson," Charlie replied, "but even with all his faults, which are many, I'll admit, he must be very lonely."

"Yes, but I suppose he makes a companion of his money. He must have a great deal."

"Yes, I guess he must; but as he is the only man of that kind around here, we don't pay much attention to him," Charlie replied.

Sandy was no sample of the class of people there, but a very rare exception; but such exceptions are found everywhere.

After posting the letters they proceeded on their way down to the sea. Edith urged her horse to the gallop as they came in sight of it.

"Oh, isn't it lovely, lovely!" she murmured to herself. "I feel as if I had never been away at all."

"Everything seems the same," exclaimed Edith, as Charlie came cantering up.

"We must come down often while you are here," Charlie said, "and go out in our old

al boat. Do you remember the last sail we had in it, Edith?" His manner was off-hand, but his voice was full of deep concern.

"Oh, yes, I do, and how we came into the end of the Island. What a time we had that night! But what good times we always had," she added, and a gentle sigh escaped her lips.

"Do you remember everything that happened that night, Edith?" again he enquired.

"Of course I do," she replied. "Wouldn't it be lovely to have a little concert some night by the sea," she continued, dreamily. "You could play your violin, I am so anxious to hear you, and I would sing. Would it not be grand? And the waves rolling up on the shore would be the accompaniment. Let us do it some night, Charlie," and she looked up into his face.

"Yes, that would be splendid. Monday night Dr. Bourne is coming for tea and we could suggest it afterwards. He would like it, especially if Winnie came," Charlie replied. "But," he added, slowly, "to-morrow evening, right after tea, couldn't we have a little sail? That is, if the wind is good."

"How lovely, Charlie. I am just longing to get out on the water!"

"Would you enjoy it?" he asked, earnestly.

"Why, I would just love it."

"Just we two," he continued, not looking

at her at all, but out—far out over the sea.

"Yes, it would remind me of the last night I managed the rudder for you."

He longed to ask her if she would not always guide his bark down the "river of life," but he said nothing.

"It would be lovely," Edith continued, "if mother, Ronald and I could always spend our summers here and have the same dear little house up there on the hill. I do so want to go through our house again. Don't you love the sea, Charlie?" she added, impulsively, looking earnestly at him.

"I like the sea," Charlie replied, soberly.

"But don't you love it?"

"No, I can't say that I love the sea. You can't love *things*," he answered, with some disgust.

"Oh, of course not the same way as you love *people*," explained Edith.

"Do you love people, Edith?"

"Why, yes."

"Many people?"

"Yes, a great many people. Do you love people, Charlie?" questioned Edith, coyly.

"Why, yes."

"Many people?"

"Not many."

"How many?" Edith queried. "I'm not counting one's family, you know."

"Only one other, Edith," and it is a wonder that Edith did not read the love in his eyes—but she did not.

"Ah, Charlie!" she teased. "You are in love, and you have never told me. How mean of you! What is she like? What is her name?"

Charlie looked at her a moment as if to read her soul, then he turned his gaze back to the ocean.

"Does she live near here?" Edith continued, and then she noticed that the color had left his face.

He was speaking low and earnestly, and his eyes were still looking away off over the sea.

"I have loved her since she was but a child. My heart has never held any other image, and never will, for she is the most perfect creature God ever made; the most beautiful, the most lovely, but—she will never be mine, for she could not love me."

"Oh, Charlie," Edith cried in ready sympathy, "I am sure she could. Have you ever asked her?"

"No."

"Well, won't you?"

He could not trust himself to look at her for answer, but instead gave his horse a sharp cut with the whip which made Black

Beauty prick up her ears and gallop away. Edith had to follow, wondering greatly at Charlie's strange manner. On the road home he seemed to have much trouble in holding Beauty in, and, in fact, quite often Edith was left far behind.

She could not help wondering if she loved Gerald with as great a love as that which Charlie had for "the lady of his dreams."

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOVE AND A RUNAWAY.

So the bright, sunny days of June passed and Edith had only a few more weeks with her friends, but they were to be full of pleasure, at least most of them. Mrs. McCullugh grew stronger every day. Now she could go out driving, and the sweet little woman seemed continually planning some new enjoyment for the young people.

Edith had often thought of confiding in Mrs. McCullugh about Gerald and herself, but somehow the last week or so Gerald had not been writing so often, and when the letters did come they were strange, and so short. He had never mentioned anything about telling her mother, and she did not ask, for she had not told her mother either. She always intended doing so, but the time never seemed to come when she could. She had so much else to write about, and one or twice she had taken up her pen to "just tell everything," but then she had put it off until the next day, and the next day the words would still be unwritten.

After they had had an evening of music and she had sung the songs she and Gerald

sang, and Charlie had played his violin, she would feel very guilty because of her neglect in not telling her mother.

There was something in Charlie's playing that she had never heard in any other: a depth and sweetness of tone that was quite marvellous. He could make the instrument almost speak in soft, love tones; but now she knew the secret, it was because Charlie was in love.

Then how clearly she could read the love in Winnie's eyes when Clyde Bourne was near, while he made no effort to conceal his admiration for her. After such an evening, when she would put her arms around the "little mother's" neck and wish her sweet dreams, a strong desire would come to tell this dear woman her secret, and yet she did not. It was soon to be revealed in a way she knew not of.

Charlie was reading aloud to his mother, while Edith and Winnie were busying themselves over some household duties. He suddenly laid down the book and, putting his arms around the "little mother's" neck, he said,

"Are you not glad, mother, that I will always be at home?"

"My dear boy, I have been so glad lately that this new mine has turned out so well.

ou are now a rich man, and you can have
e desire of your heart, for you can now
udy the violin under the best masters. It
ll only take time to make you famous, I
now."

"Tut, mother, you flatter me. I am too old
ow to think of that: besides, I would much
ther go into business with Fred and make
y dear little mother's life as easy as it can
e."

"No, Charlie, all your life you have
ought of others, now you must think of
urself."

"You know, mother," Charlie began, earn-
tly. "I had a letter from Fred to-day and
e has decided to take me into partnership as
silent partner. I will make a trip there
ery little while and provide capital, and
red will be the manager on the spot, so to
eak. I will be home with you a good deal.
ather needs me here sometimes."

"Yes, but, my dear boy," and there was a
oud of anxiety on the gentle brow, "some
y you will get married, I hope, and——"

"No, mother," Charlie interrupted hastily,
don't think of that, for I never will."

The cloud on the fair brow deepened.

"But, why, my son? If you have not met
e right girl yet, you will some day soon."

The mother had been quick to see the light

which came into Charlie's eyes when Edith was near, and she had feared for him. She had also noticed the frenqueney of Edith's letter writing and how, when certain letters would come, she would steal off alone to read them, and she feared for Edith. But she wanted her son to confide in her.

"No, I will never meet her, mother," Charlie said as he got up and walked to the window.

"Why? Come here, Charlie."

The sweet, gentle voice was very motherly and restful. When he was standing beside her, she said,

"Now tell me why. Have you met her al ready, Charlie?"

"Yes, I have met her."

"Long ago, Charlie?" the sweet voice asked.

"Yes, long ago, mother dear."

"I am guessing aright, then," she con tinued, softly, and tears shone in her eyes. "I am very, very sorry for you, my dear boy."

"Well, then you, too, think it impossible," Charlie interrupted.

"No, not impossible, but----" and here she hesitated a moment, wondering just what to say, "but- I feel it will all be right some day," she added, helplessly.

"Oh, yes, when I am dead and gone, I suppose."

"No, my dear boy, here on this earth. You have not said anything to her yet?" she enquired.

"No, and I never will. Why, mother, it would be simply impossible to think that she could ever love me. What have I to offer her? Then think of all the fine men she has met, and will meet; men with brains, and position, and everything she could desire."

"But, Charlie," his mother broke in, "dear Edith has a heart, and love is the first thing with a girl like her. Why," and the "little mother" waxed eloquent, "my son has everything a girl could desire. He can offer her a true heart, a heart that has never had another love; a clean life; and, dear, you must not forget that fortune has been smiling on you of late, making it possible for you to offer her every comfort and even luxury. What more do you desire?"

Charlie was silent for a moment. He walked up and down the room, and then bent over his mother, taking one of her small white hands in his.

"You are a dear mother," he said, in a trained voice. "There was never a better mother, but, dear, you do not understand that it can never be. She is far above me, but.

oh, mother, you cannot understand what it would mean to me if she could ever love me! I would give all I own to see the 'love light' come into her eyes and to know that I caused it. Mother, mother!" and Charlie, who had never unburdened his heart before, laid it open before the loving heart of one who had come through much, given up much, for love, and who knew the depth and the sweetness of it.

She comforted him as only a mother can. She tried to point out to him that all would yet be well. She did not tell him of her fears, for she could not bear to wound him further. "Who knows," she thought, "perhaps I have not been reading Edith's heart correctly." And perhaps she had not.

On leaving his mother Charlie passed through the room where he had left the girls. Winnie was alone.

"Where is Edith?" he asked.

"She went out some time ago," said Winnie, "to the well to get a jug of water."

"But I thought I heard her go upstairs and then come down and go outside by the front door."

"Why, did you?" questioned Winnie, looking up in some surprise. "I did not."

"I think I'll go out, perhaps I will see her around," Charlie answered.

He could see Edith nowhere, the pitcher was at the well, empty, and he began to be a little alarmed. Going out to the barn, as he thought she might have gone there to look for his father, he found no trace of her, but Black Beauty was gone, and the saddle too.

Hailing Bob, the stable boy, he asked, sharply,

"Bob, do you know where Beauty is?"

"Yes, sir; Miss Grey took him out."

"Miss Grey took him out!" Charlie reiterated in astonishment. "And did you let her?"

"Why yes, sir; she said she just wanted to have a little ride. I asked her if she could ride well, and she says, 'Why, Bob, I can ride anything.' I wouldn't be letting the lady put the saddle on that there horse," he said, proudly, "so I fixed him up for her. What's the matter, sir?" he called, as Charlie, his face set and white, began to harness Nell, the little pony Edith had ridden the first day they went to the sea.

"Can't she ride, sir!" poor Bob exclaimed in terror. "If she can't, why it's all up with the lady, sir."

"Shut up, Bob, and give me a hand here."

"Oh, sir!" the little fellow wailed, "if she's killed I'll be to blame," and the big tears began to tumble down his cheeks.

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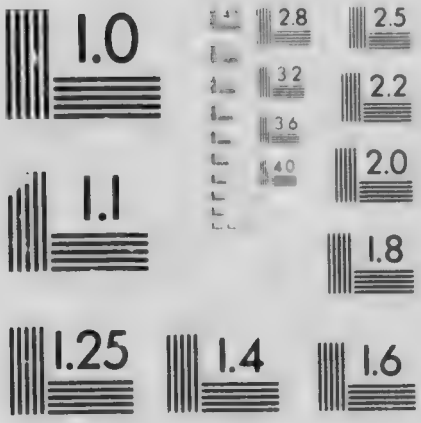

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"How long has she been gone?" Charlie thundered at him as he mounted Nell.

The little mare felt that something unusual had happened, she pricked up her ears and was eager to start.

"Oh, not long, sir! I don't know, sir," the poor boy gasped.

"Don't mention this," Charlie called back to him, and Nell galloped like lightning down the lane.

On, on, they sped, past Peter McNabb's. Some men in the field stopped, looked at them, and wondered. Then on past Sandy Johnson's. As he neared the post office an old man stood at the door. Charlie pulled up a little and shouted at him,

"Did you see Miss Grey pass here?"

"Yes," yelled the man, "about half an hour ago or more. She was going like the wind, and——" Charlie heard no more.

Down the road he went "faster than the wind."

"That's the girl, go it, Nell, go it!"

Charlie could hardly control himself.

"God help me to be in time," was the prayer in his heart.

He patted the beautiful neck, curved proudly.

"Go it, Nell! It's to save her, to save her!"

No doubt she had started for the sea, but which road Beauty would take he did not know, and could not think, but the little mare kept to the ocean road.

The dusk was falling and the shadows deepening. Why had she done this foolish thing? Suppose they were not in time! He could not bear to think of that. What was that in the distance? Was it just a shadow? He pulled Nell down to a trot. Surely 'twas not a shadow. He jumped down quickly.

There was Black Beauty, but where was Edith?

As the animal saw his master he bent his beautiful head down to a form half-hidden in the bushes. In an instant Charlie had the apparently lifeless form in his arms. He listened; the breathing was regular and she was not moaning.

Black Beauty continued to paw the earth with one hoof and bend his head over Edith.

"Oh, my love, my love!" Charlie murmured. "Look up and open your eyes. Oh, God! It cannot be that you will die. Edith, my darling, speak to me." He bent over and kissed her brow, then her lips, and rubbed her hands. "Oh, if you would only speak to me; how I have loved you!" he breathed in anguish, "and to lose you now, like this. Speak to me, sweetheart!"

Edith opened her eyes.

A hot flush mounted to her cheeks, and Charlie, bending over her, saw that she had heard. A pained expression came over her face.

"Oh, Charlie, I'm not dead, am I?"

"No, thank God!" There was a catch in Charlie's voice.

"Poor Beauty," continued Edith, "I am afraid his front leg is broken. He tripped on a stone and threw me, but I am not badly hurt. See, I can stand," and she stood up without much difficulty. "But, Charlie, do look at Beauty."

"Oh! what does anything else matter as long as you are safe, Edith," Charlie could not help saying. His heart was so full he had to speak.

"Do look at the foot," Edith urged.

"I am afraid I can't see very well," Charlie said, nervously.

Poor Beauty held up his foot and bent his head low until it touched its master's, as if asking for sympathy. Charlie could see that there was a nasty cut, but could tell nothing more, except that he hardly thought the leg was broken.

"I don't know what we are to do," Charlie added. "Beauty can't step on that foot."

Then he moved over to Edith and caught

er two hands in his; he knew he should not peak, but he could not help it.

"Edith," he said, and his voice was so low at she could barely hear, "I love you. I ever intended telling you, for I know you annot possibly love me, but, oh, I must tell you that I have loved you——"

"Don't, don't," came in broken accents from Edith.

"That I have loved you," the voice repeated, "ever since you were a child. Have you never suspected it, dear? All my life my one dream has been of you. Do not speak, for 'twould be to say that you did not love me, but just answer me one thing. Do you love another, Edith?"

There was silence only for the space of a few seconds, then Edith straightened herself up and drew her hands away.

"Yes, Charlie," she tried to answer steadily.

He uttered not a word, but walked over to Black Beauty and put his arms around the neck of the proud thoroughbred and hid his face. Beauty seemed to understand, for he stood very quiet and pushed his head close to his master. His foot was very painful. It would be healed, though, while Charlie's wounded heart would always be sore.

The rumbling of a waggon was heard, and

in a moment a gruff voice called out, "What's the matter there?"

Charlie came to himself.

"Is that you, Sandy?"

"It's myself, young man; ha'ed you a smashup?"

"No," Charlie answered, quickly, intending to tell the old man nothing more than was necessary. "Black Beauty has hurt his foot badly. Perhaps you could give Miss Grey a lift while I take Beauty and Nell home."

"You didna seem to be deciding ways and means of getting hame when I came up," Sandy remarked. Getting no answer, he continued, "Veery weel, come along, Miss Grey, and we'll be hame before Charlie."

"Can the creature walk?" he asked Charlie.

"We can manage, thanks," Charlie answered.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE STORY TOLD.

When Edith came downstairs the next morning Charlie had been suddenly called away on business and had taken the early morning train. He would return in a few days. The family had barely recovered from the nervous strain of the night before. Black Beauty's leg was not broken, but it would take a few weeks before the nasty wound would be healed.

Mrs. McCullugh was still resting, and Mr. McCullugh had driven Charlie to the train. The house seemed empty. The two girls sat down to breakfast alone, Winnie bright and cheerful and thankful that Edith had escaped so well; but poor Edith somehow felt that things would never be the same again. She could have no more sails with Charlie in the boat; no more musical evenings. She could do no more riding, and a certain restraint and embarrassment would be over everything.

"You poor dear!" Winnie was all sympathy; not an unkind or fault-finding word had been said to Edith, and her foolish part of it had not been mentioned.

"You look tired, and I'm sure you will be very sore, too; you must be quiet to-day."

"What nonsense, Winnie!" Edith tried to be cheerful. "I am splendid. True, my head is aching the tiniest bit, but it will soon be better. Let me take your mother's breakfast up to her?"

"You are a dear. That is just what I wanted you to do. Mother will be anxious to see you, to make sure that there are no bones broken."

Mrs. McCullugh had worried a great deal through the night, both at Charlie's worn and sad face after he returned, and at his strange manner, then at the sudden leave-taking. Edith did not seem natural; something had happened, and it did not take the "little mother" very long to form a pretty accurate guess.

When Edith entered the room with the tray and greeted Mrs. McCullugh with forced gaiety, the sweet little woman read of the sleepless night and worry in the tired eyes and white face.

What could cause such a change in gay, cheerful Edith except the knowledge of inflicting pain on another? The mother's tender heart felt very heavy indeed, but she must not let Edith suspect that she had noticed anything unusual, for she understood, as only a mother can, what pain a true woman feels in causing pain to a friend.

If only Edith would confide in her! She had grown to love the sweet, tender hearted girl as her own daughter, and she felt very keenly for her. When Edith had laid the tray down Mrs. McCullugh said, gently,

"It would be lovely if you could read some of Browning to me to-night, dear. Dr. Bourne will be here and Winnie's time will be taken up, I fancy, so that you and I will be alone, as Mr. McCullugh has to stay in town over night."

"I would just love to," said Edith. "And after dinner we can go for a little drive. Would you like that?"

"I would, indeed. The day is beautiful," and the little woman smiled brightly.

The evening came, and Dr. Bourne, too. After visiting his patient to make sure that he was making a professional call, he and Winnie strolled out among the roses.

"Now, perhaps you would rather be out with Winnie than in here all alone with me, dear," Mrs. McCullugh said sweetly, as Edith seated herself beside the "little mother" ready to read whatever she wished.

"No, indeed," Edith answered brightly. "I would feel like a base intruder, I know; and, besides, I just love being with you. You have always been so like a mother to me, I will miss you very much when I leave."

"Yes, dear, we will not speak of your leaving for a long time yet. We are enjoying your visit with us so much. We all love you, dear, for you have, ever since coming, been a great blessing to us."

"Please don't say that, Mrs. McCullugh."

Edith looked out of the window to try and keep the tears from coming, for she felt so lonely for her own mother. If she only had some one to whom she could confide everything what a weight would be lifted from her heart; then, fearful lest she should unburden her heart to this sweet little woman, she composed herself quickly.

"What shall we read?" she said, trying to look at the tender eyes that seemed to be searching hers.

"I think I would rather talk, dear. I have not seen you since the mail came, and you were so anxious to hear from your mother; she had been delayed in writing."

"But I had a note from her to-day, and she is well, but gave no excuse for the delay. However, I know there must be some good reason."

Edith began to feel less embarrassed as the conversation took a less personal aspect.

"She also mentioned," Edith continued, "that my dear teacher was home again, and anxious for me to put an end to my idleness."

"I have always wanted you to tell me more about this teacher you so often mention."

Edith seized the opportunity and waxed eloquent on the master's genius and ability, little knowing the trap she would fall into. The "little mother" was becoming very much interested.

"And did you say this wonderful man lives alone, no wife, or home?" she asked.

A blush rose to Edith's cheek.

"Oh, no!" she said, bravely trying not to show any concern. "He has a friend with him, a student."

"Some relation, no doubt." The blush had not been unnoticed.

"No, he is a son of a very dear friend of his."

"Quite a wonderful child, I suppose, when the great Karl Haufmann would become so interested in him."

The blush deepened.

"No, he is quite a young man."

At any other time Edith would have smiled at saying this, but now she did not, for she felt that the "little mother" had noticed the blush and had guessed the cause.

Mrs. McCullugh leaned over and took the small, warm hands in hers.

"And do you often sing together, dear; this young man and you?"

Oh, what a wonderful woman she was, this "little mother," and so wise!

Edith bent her head low, until it rested on the "little mother's" lap, and her voice was very unsteady.

"Dear Mrs. McCullugh, I am so sorry. I should have told you when I first came, and oh, so much pain might have been spared!"

"Tell me now, my child," the gentle voice breathed.

"This young man, Gerald Warren is his name . . . " Edith found it very hard to proceed. "Oh, dear Mrs. McCullugh, I am to marry him. Can you ever forgive me for not telling you before?"

She had not been told what she had to forgive, but now she knew. She knew the reason for the white face and tired eyes; for Charlie's strange manner and hasty departure. But she differed from most mothers in that knowing all this, and also what it would mean to her only son, she felt only love in her heart for Edith, for she knew that the affections of the heart are not always ruled by us.

Then, in broken accents, Edith told Mrs. McCullugh all about Gerald and herself, but when she mentioned never having told her mother, the little woman wondered, and a puzzled expression came over her face. When the story was ended Mrs. McCullugh lifted

e tear-stained face to hers and kissed the
overing lips.

"May you be very happy, dear," she said,
d her voice was none too steady. "Love
a wonderful thing, for it can make life
aven on earth.' No matter what trials
me, love is always with you; or the lack of
can make life hardly worth living. Now,
ood night, Edith, for I am very tired."

The traces of tears had not left Edith's
es when Winnie stole quietly into her room.
Noticing the tear stained face, she said,

"What, Edith, been crying? What's the
atter, dear?"

"Oh, nothing, Winnie. I am just crying
or joy, I suppose, that I was not killed last
ight." She did try so hard to be cheerful.

"Well, it's all over now, so don't cry any
more," Winnie went on, evidently believing
her statement. "But listen to what I have
o tell you. I'm the happiest girl in the world
o night, for I love the best man in the world,
nd he loves me."

Winnie's beautiful eyes shone with joy,
nd her cheeks were like the pink roses she
ore on her breast.

"Why don't you wish me joy, Edith?"

"Oh, Winnie," Edith cried, "I do wish you
very joy and happiness, and I am so glad,
or I know that you will be very happy and

will just make the sweetest little wife that ever lived."

"Hush," Winnie was all blushes, "I just came in to bid you good-night and I had to tell you. Now I must run and let mother know before she goes to sleep."

The door closed on happy Winnie, but Edith lay awake long into the night wondering if she was the "happiest girl in the world" because Gerald Warren loved her.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LONELY SONG OF THE VIOLIN.

A week had passed and another bright July day was drawing to a close. Mrs. McCullugh and Winnie were out driving and Mr. McCullugh had gone for the mail. Edith was alone.

Another long delay in receiving her mother's letter had caused Edith considerable anxiety. Surely her mother could not be feeling well, or she would write more regularly, and it was nearly two weeks since she had received a letter from Gerald.

In a short time she heard the rumble of wheels on the gravel, and Charlie opened the door. His face was pale and his eyes looked very tired and weary.

"Here all alone, Edith?" he asked, pleasantly.

"Charlie! You frightened me. Yes, your mother and Winnie are out driving." She was very much surprised to see him.

"You will be anxious for your mail. Father sent me in with it, for he said you were expecting word from home," he said, holding a number of letters in his hand.

"Yes, I have been so anxious about mother."

After giving Edith her letter, he went out to the hall to hang up his hat. Returning a moment later he was shocked; Edith had sunk into a chair, her face buried in her hands, and an open letter lay on her lap. Charlie did not know what to say or do. He stood looking at her for a moment, but Edith did not seem to know he was in the room .

"Is anything the matter, Edith?" he said in a husky voice.

"Oh!" Edith looked up surprised. "I thought you had left the room, Charlie. You can read this," she said, handing him the letter.

"Dear Edith,—

"I intended sending you a wire, but thought it might alarm you. The Herrick mine has failed, and all mother's money with it. You had better come home at once as mother is in the 'blues.' Of course this does not include yours or mine, so we still have a little. Don't worry, for I am young yet and have not lost the use of either my hands or brain. We will expect you the first part of the week.

"Your brother,

"Ronald."

Charlie did not know what sum had been lost, except that "all" must mean a great deal.

"Don't worry, Edith, it's only money. I was afraid it might be something worse. What is money anyway?" he said, trying to comfort her.

"Oh, it is not the money I am thinking of so much as how worried mother will feel," sighed Edith.

The last ten days had not been very happy ones for her, and now this was the finishing touch.

"But," she added, quickly, as voices were heard outside announcing the others' return, "do not mention anything to your mother or Winnie. It would only worry them to know. I will explain in the morning that I have to leave very soon on account of mother not being well."

"Very well, Edith, just as you wish, but I feel very grateful that you have allowed me to know."

Edith had no time to reply to this when Mrs. McCullugh and Winnie, accompanied by Dr. Bourne, entered the room. They were so surprised at seeing Charlie that the look of worry on Edith's face passed unnoticed.

Edith soon slipped out, remarking to Winnie that she felt tired and would be excused,

and Winnie, so full of her own happiness, observed nothing strange in Edith's manner.

She wanted to be alone to think over this new trouble. She could hardly realize just what the loss of so much money would mean to them, for, ever since she could remember, money matters had never given her much cause for worry. Every reasonable wish had been granted, and if everything was denied, it was not for want of means.

She made her way through the rose garden, plucking one of the fairest blooms and fastening it in the lace at her throat. The fragrance was so sweet it made her think of their own roses at home, and how she had coaxed them to grow, until they had covered the little summer-house in the corner of the garden. Then she passed through the orchard until she came to the extreme end, where flowed a clear little stream. The water was always cool and sweet, and here the girls had often spent the hot afternoon reading.

There was an old summer-seat on either side of the stream, the one being hidden from the other by the tall shrubs. She sat down here and chided herself for remaining away so long from her mother. She should have returned shortly after Mrs. McCullugh began to get strong again, but she had had such a lovely time, and had enjoyed every moment

especially the time spent by the sea until that night." How she wished from the depths of her heart that she had never taken that venturesome ride with Black Beauty. She had not only caused pain to Charlie, but also to the "little mother" whom she loved so much, and it seemed such a cruel thing to have her visit end in this way. If she had never come this would not have happened, and there would not be that weight on her heart when the scene that night all come back to her. She would much rather have gone without a holiday than to cause pain to her friends. One thing she was glad of, and that was that Flossie had gone to visit friends for the summer instead of returning home, for the little mischief would have been sure to tease her about her changed manner. She did not know whether Winnie suspected anything or not, but if she had, it had made no difference in her manner. She laid her head down on her arms, and her heart felt very sad indeed.

Slowly and softly the song of a violin rose in the air. She quickly lifted her head and looked around, but could see no one. Charlie must be playing in the house. But no, surely the sound seemed nearer than that!

Oh, how sad the strains were! As if all the sorrow of a breaking heart had been put into

each note; there was nothing of hope or gladness in it; just sadness and despair.

She felt her whole being tremble, for the violin seemed to be speaking, telling a tale of terrible loneliness and loss, of a soul crying out in its anguish and utter helplessness.

The song ceased, as if the sensitive strings could bear the burden of sorrow no longer.

The night was very still. Away far off in the woods the lonely call of a bird to its mate could be heard.

Edith stood up and again looked around. A short distance in front she could dimly discern a dark figure half hidden by the bushes.

Charlie was leaning against a tree with his head resting on his arm, the other hand hanging by his side clasping the violin. The moonlight played on his bowed head, and utter loneliness was the companion of his soul.

Should she approach him? She could not restrain the desire to do so, for she alone had been responsible for the weight of sadness on his heart. How he must love to be able to play like that! Never had she listened to such sorrow and pathos; the violin seemed to be almost human, laying bare the burden of a lonely heart.

"Charlie." He lifted his head with a start when she breathed his name.

"Edith!" And his expression was one of pain. "Have you been here all the time?" Oh, that he should add this to her trouble! What would she think of him!

"Yes, I have been over there," motioning to the old summer-seat.

Why did the moonlight fall full upon her sweet, sad face, the beautiful eyes, and the crush rose at her lovely throat! The rose, the emblem of love, and that love to be given to another! He bent his head low, for looking upon the beautiful face, the face of his dreams, added another pain to his heart.

Edith could not control the tremble in her voice as she said, "I want to tell you how very sorry I am for all the pain I have caused you, Charlie. If I had known I should never have come this summer. You will forgive me, won't you?"

She hardly recognized his voice it seemed so full of pain.

"There is nothing for me to forgive, Edith," he said. "But no words can express my sorrow for casting a shadow upon the last of your visit with us, nor the contempt with which I regard myself for placing you in such an embarrassing position. I only ask that you will cast me and any unpleasantness that I have caused you out of your thoughts entirely."

He had steeled himself to speak in this formal way, for now he knew that his violin had laid bare the sufferings of his heart before her. If he had dared to look he could not have failed to see how the sweet lips quivered, and the beautiful eyes were well-nigh full of tears.

What had she done to cause Charlie to speak in that hard, pained voice? Instead of mending matters she had only made them worse. How glad she would be to be home again, where she would not always be causing pain.

She stood for a moment in the bright moonlight. She could not speak, for she did not know what to say. Then slowly she moved past him, up through the orchard, past the beautiful rose bushes, then quickly into the solitude of her own room, leaving a silent figure with bowed head still standing by the little stream beyond the orchard.

How long he remained there only the moonbeams could tell, but his heart was so lonel and sad that it was well-nigh breaking, and his honest blue eyes were filled with sorrow.

Edith longed for her mother and home. She tried to picture being with them again. She sat down and read Gerald's letters and tried to think of how happy she would be to see him. She thought of the last evening

ment with him and all it meant to them both. Surely they would be very happy together. But every now and then her thoughts would fly to the little brook in the orchard, to the silent figure standing there, and to the wonderful song of the violin.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOME AND THE "MOTHER LOVE."

Mrs. McCullugh and Winnie were sorry to hear that Edith must leave them so soon on account of Mrs. Grey not being well. They would sorely miss her, for they had grown to love her; she had been so kind, sympathetic and thoughtful all through the "little mother's" illness. She was the life of the household, always ready for anything, and adapting herself to all circumstances. She was never in the way, and had that gentle art of never becoming tiresome. She knew when to be one of the family and when to spend an hour alone, always interested in anything that concerned her friends, and yet never becoming personal. In the evening they had enjoyed listening to her wonderful voice. Indeed, they did not care to think of how lonely they would be and how empty the house would seem without her.

Even Mr. McCullugh had grown strangely attached to her and would sit all evening, saying nothing, but just listening to her songs. Not being endowed with the keen perception of his gentle wife, he had noticed no change in Edith's manner during the past week. He

as not a man of many words, but when bid ng Edith good-bye his "I'm sorry you're eaving us, lass," meant a great deal more han mere words; and Edith understood this.

She tried to remain bright and cheerful up the last. It was only when alone in her oom that sometimes her heart would be sad. But, truly, 'tis often the brightest lives that ade the darkest hours. They all felt very orry that Mrs. Grey was not well, and rusted that whatever the matter was it would oon be over when Edith was with her again.

The time seemed all too short until the hour f her departure was at hand.

Winnie insisted upon driving Edith to the rain and Charlie was glad, for he felt that o be alone with her again would be more than e would be equal to. But he could not help olding the little hand very firmly in his own nd looking deep into the beautiful eyes just or a moment. It might be the last time for many years. Yet sometimes an unseen fate lecides little matters for us in a most unexpected manner. When he said good-bye, it eemed but the echo of his heart, for he knew he loneliness and bitterness it meant to him, nd would always mean.

Far down the road, as they sped on, Edith urned her head to look again on the dear old ome. One solitary figure stood straining his

eyes to catch the last g'impse of them as they disappeared from view. Then the sun ceased to shine for Charlie and low the shadows fell

The journey was nearing an end, as all journeys do, and Edith was all excitement to catch the first glimpse of her mother. Surely she would be there to meet her. She could not picture her gentle mother looking worried. Mrs. Grey was a woman who never grew old, and one who had always seen the bright side of life, so that she could not imagine her sad and sorrowful. Surely Gerald and Ronald would be there to meet her too! How she would chide her truant lover for being so neglectful of her lately; but he had some good reason, no doubt. Of course she would at once tell her dear mother everything, and they would all be a happy family again. How light-hearted she became as every mile brought her nearer home.

As the train pulled into the crowded station it took Edith only a moment to discern amongst the many faces that of her mother and Ronald, and still less time to rush into her mother's arms.

"Mother, I'm so glad to be home," she exclaimed, but she quickly noticed the first lines of worry on the sweet face. "Are you well, mother?"

"Yes, dearie, but I will soon be my old self

gain now that I have my girl back with me."
And the mother's tender eyes were full of
ove for her daughter.

"Well, I guess I'll go back to the office,
mother," Ronald announced with a broad
grin. "This young lady evidently doesn't
know me."

"Ronald, dear boy, I have been so taken
up with mother, but, never mind, I'll cover
your face with kisses when we get home."

"Please don't, Edith," he coaxed. "I really
am in a very delicate state of health, and my
heart is weak."

"Well, I will show you how strong I have
grown in the country," Edith replied, laughing. Then a strange look came into her eyes.
"But where is——" she began, and then
stopped.

"Who are you looking for?" Ronald
teased. "Some old beau, I suppose. Surely
not the tall son of Italy, Edith?"

The color rushed from Edith's face, leaving
it white for a moment.

"Oh, no," she hurriedly replied, "I suppose none of the girls knew I was coming,
mother?"

"No, dear, I thought you would like to surprise them." But she had not failed to note
the disappointed look on Edith's face, and a
sort of dull dread came into her heart.

However, in a moment Edith was composed again and became so interested in everything, asking questions and answering them so brightly that Mrs. Grey felt that perhaps her fears were ungrounded. Ronald had to leave them on the way home to go back to the office. Edith could hardly wait to remove her hat when they reached home before making a survey of everything. Was there anything new? How lovely the conservatory looked with its mass of bloom! The door-bell rang; some one to see Mrs. Grey, and Edith flew upstairs to her room to note the changes there, if any.

Was that a box of flowers on the table? She hurriedly opened it, and hidden among the lovely pink roses was a little note. Quickly breaking the seal, she read,

"My dear Edith,—

"I greatly regret my inability to meet you at the train, but unforeseen business calls me out of town for a few days. Let these roses convey my love to you, and I pray that the hours may fly, until Thursday evening, which I look forward to spending with you.

"Yours forever,

"Gerald."

These must have come while her mother was out, and Molly, the little maid, had

ought them up to her room. She wondered hat "pressing business" could have taken m out of town—and then, just for a second, e picture rose up in her mind of the solitary gure leaning against the gate of the dear old ome she had left. The picture faded as uickly as it came, and her eyes rested on the oses.

Somehow, her disappointment was not so reat at Gerald's absence as she had thought. ut she must tell her mother everything at nce. It was so strange that Gerald had not lone so.

Making her way downstairs, she forgot for moment that someone had called. She listened—that was surely not Mr. Herrick. After causing her mother so much trouble hy did he continue to bother her?

The interview was evidently of short duraion, for in a few moments her mother met er in the hall, looking troubled and sad.

"Mother, dear," she said, "why can't that an stay away? Surely he has bothered you nough."

"Yes, but, Edith," was the weary answer, come in here and sit down beside me, for I ant to explain some matters to you."

When they were seated on the big lounge n the sunny library Mrs. Grey continued.

"Of course you know, Edith, that the

money I invested in this mining venture is a total loss, and Mr. Herrick and others have lost heavily too. The land we bought adjoining the 'Great Bear Mine,' thinking it to be equally as rich, has proved utterly worthless so far as mineral worth is concerned. I am not attaching any blame to Mr. Herrick, for I went into it with my eyes open, but, my dear girl, you understand that such a loss of money to us will mean many changes."

"But mother, have we, Ronald and I, not our shares left?"

"Yes, Edith, but I could not think of using that."

"Why not? Of course you will. Ronald is of age, and I will be this coming winter, and it is time we were making use of it."

"No, dear, that money was left to you by your father, to be given to you and invested by you, not to be used in maintaining the family."

"Now, mother, don't talk like that, for we will use it. And please do not worry any more."

"I have some real estate, of course," the mother continued, "and the income from that gives us almost enough to live on."

"And, mother, dear," Edith interrupted, "the house and grounds are ours."

"Yes, but that is just what I am worrying

about. If we were to sell and take a little flat uptown it would——"

"Mother! Mother!" Edith exclaimed, "don't, oh, please don't do that! Let us live cheaply here, but don't sell it."

There were tears in the mother's eyes.

"It would be very hard to leave it, wouldn't it, dear?"

"Let us not talk of it any more, mother," and Edith led her mother out into the garden. The bright sunshine made everything look beautiful.

"Come where the flowers bloom," she said, cheerfully. "We will manage admirably, and, mother, dear, never, never worry again, for I cannot bear to see you look sad. Now let us take a survey of the garden. I am anxious to see how well everything has grown, and then, mother, we will go into the little summer house, for I have something to tell you."

She must tell her mother now, for it would not be wise to risk putting it off any longer.

The weight came back to the mother's heart, but she said nothing. The garden was at the height of its beauty, all the flowering plants were in bloom, and although the season was passed for the roses, a few stragglers still remained on the bushes opening their beautiful faces to the sunlight. The little

arch was covered with some flowering vine and also the trellis work at the side.

"I wish you could have seen the summer house about the last of June, Edith," Mrs. Grey said as they were nearing it. "The roses were out in hundreds and there never was a more beautiful sight. I would often come out here and sit for hours, just breathing in the fragrance."

"Now, mother," Edith began, nervously, as she took her mother's hand in hers, "I'm going to ask you to forgive me for not telling all this sooner."

"What is it, Edith?"

"Mother, I have promised to marry Gerald Warren."

"Edith!" The mother's lips were white and her heart was growing very heavy. "When did this happen?"

Then followed the whole story of that last night and all that was said; then of how she had attempted to write, telling her, but how she expected that Gerald would, she did not quite understand why he had not, and, lastly, of the roses and the note. The mother's face grew whiter as the story continued, and there was a look in the tender eyes that Edith could not understand.

"Oh, my daughter, why did you not let me

know all this long ago?" the mother exclaimed, when the story was ended.

"Mother, are you very much disappointed?"

"I am very, very sorry that my daughter could keep a secret of that kind so long from her mother," Mrs. Grey replied, sadly, and then continued, slowly,

"Edith, do you remember that talk we had out here one day early in the spring about Mr. Warren?"

"Yes, mother."

"And do you remember saying that it was only admiration you felt for Gerald?"

"Yes, mother."

Edith's lips were beginning to tremble and her heart to beat very quickly, for she knew what question her mother intended asking, and it was a question she had been afraid for some little time past, and was still afraid, to ask her own heart.

"Are you sure," the gentle voice continued, "that you feel something infinitely stronger than admiration for him now? You know, dear," she went on, without waiting for an answer, "the love that makes married life happy and keeps the whole life happy has to be of the strongest and purest type. There is nothing stronger or purer than it, except a mother's love. When we marry we give the

whole life over into the loved one's keeping, and no darker fate could befall anyone than, after the most serious step in life had been taken, to waken up to the grim knowledge that some other sentiment had been mistaken for love."

She said nothing about Gerald; somehow she felt, from the way Edith told the story, that the true love of her daughter's heart had not been given to this man.

She did not question any further, nor even expect an answer to her question just then, for she knew that perhaps a little hard thinking on Edith's part might lead her to a true answer. Of her own fears in regard to Gerald, she did not even hint. Probably that part of the question would solve itself.

After her mother had done speaking Edith sat in deep thought for some time, then rising she threw her arms around her mother's neck and the tears that she wept were an intermingling of repentance, doubt, and love; but love for whom?

Truly the ways of the heart are past finding out.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FACTS AND MEMORIES.

It was Wednesday. Karl Haufmann had sent word during the day that he would spend the evening with the Greys. He was sorry he had not managed to call the night before, as he had intended, but a matter of importance had delayed him.

Edith was in the garden when she saw Karl Haufmann approach the house. He had not noticed her, and intending to give him a surprise, as this was the first time she had seen him since her return, she decided to first pluck a large bouquet for him and then enter the house through the conservatory.

Mrs. Grey met him in the hall.

"Ah! here you are, my friend," she said, as they walked into the drawing-room. "I have missed you lately. What has been the trouble?"

"I am much worried, dear Mrs. Grey," he answered.

The ocean trip had done him good; it had taken his mind off himself, and since returning he had been so sympathetic over this new loss of Mrs. Grey's; indeed, the two had become the greatest friends.

True, unselfish friendship is a rare jewel, but it is one of the finest things in the world. Each felt that they had found a friend in the other. The lines of suffering and bitterness on his face had been softened, for he was seeing life now from a different standpoint, and found it worth living.

"But where is Edith?" he added. "I am anxious to see her, and probably to scold her for being so idle all summer."

"I thought she was in the garden. Did you not notice her as you came in?"

"No, I didn't see her; probably she will be here in a moment. However, I have something bothering me which I wish to ask your advice about and we can have a little talk before she comes."

"You shouldn't worry; it makes grey hairs," she chided.

"Oh, dear friend, I am just beginning to know what it is not to worry. It seems to me that for many years my mind has not been as free from bitter thoughts, and worry of all kinds, as it is now; and your influence, Mrs. Grey, has had much to do with it."

Karl Haufman was a very fine-looking man, his features were classic, and he was tall and finely proportioned. There was a quiet dignity and charm about him, which had grown and developed since the bitterness

had gone out of his heart. The friendship for this sweet woman had brought back a touch of old time kindness and graciousness of manner.

"I think I mentioned something of this another night, shortly after my return, but was interrupted in some way."

He did not notice that the color was leaving Mrs. Grey's cheeks as he continued:

"It is regarding Gerald Warren that I speak."

The mother's eyes took a hasty glance around as if to make sure that no one had entered.

"Yes!" she said, in a strained voice. "Is he proving a disappointment?"

"My dear Mrs. Grey," and Karl Hauffmann began to walk up and down the length of the room excitedly, "He is more than a disappointment. I am greatly bothered to know what to do. I sailed with his foster-father, going over this summer, and he gave me a hint as to some of the very bad habits Gerald was cultivating. Of course you know," he was becoming indignant and did not notice how white his listener looked, "I have been kindness itself to the young man, and he is proving, and has already proved, himself to be utterly unworthy of it. Where

I made the great mistake was in ever allowing him to share my rooms with me."

"Why, what has he done?" came the rather timid question.

"I have just heard positively that he is a gambler of the first order." He also failed to hear the rustle of skirts in the conservatory, and then absolute stillness. "The club that he became a member of when he first came here, I learn now, is a regular gambling place of high order, of course, but where young men are led, with the intention of making them lose both their heads and their money. I tell you, my friend, it is preposterous! When he came in this morning, after having been out all night, I tried to speak to him, but he was beyond all reasoning. Why, what is it, Mrs. Grey?" he suddenly exclaimed, as he glanced at her white face.

She had risen and was walking quickly into the conservatory.

"My poor, dear child," she murmured, and then he saw Edith, like a beautiful white lily, standing in the midst of all the blooms, her face colorless and her large dark eyes full of indignation.

"Mother, mother, don't look so pale!" she said, in a low, intense voice. "I don't love him; I know I don't love him; even if the stories were not true, I don't love him.

ease do not worry, mother, for my heart not broken. I know now that I never gave m my heart, and he never gave me his or e could not act in this way."

"Oh, are you sure, my dear?" the mother reathed.

"Yes, quite sure, mother," she murmured. Her pride has been sorely wounded, and en—he had not been out of town as the note aid.

While watching this tableau many thoughts ad flown through Karl Haufmann's mind. What! They surely could not be alluding o Gerald. What had made Edith so white? She must have heard what had been said. But surely the scoundrel could not have dared to make love to Edith! And Edith—h, no! A girl could not love a man like that, and some true, loving hearts go without ove all their lives!

What was Edith saying?

"It was all a mistake, mother. I see it now. Please do not look so worried."

Then turning her head she said in a low voice as if to herself,

"No, I do not love him like that, not like that."

"Like what, dear? What are you saying?" the mother questioned, eagerly.

She could not be expected to know that the

scene has changed for Edith. She was again by the little brook in the orchard, and the lonely song of a violin filled the air.

"No, not like that," she murmured again. "I did not love him like that."

Mr. Haufmann had risen to go. He felt he had no right to listen to what was not intended for his ears, and Mrs. Grey had seemingly forgotten his presence; but Edith, noticing him and realizing for the first time what he must think of it all, moved towards him.

"My dear teacher, how strange this must appear to you; but mother thought that what you were saying about Gerald would, perhaps, hurt me very much—and it does, more than words can tell; but it is not a heart wound, and I have been telling mother so."

He had taken her cold, white hands in his and was trying to be gentle in what he said.

"Edith, you do not mean to say that this man, Gerald Warren, has made love to you. Tell me, dear child, if he has and if you love him."

"No. I am sure I do not really love him."

"Oh, I am glad of that; but if you do, love can do wonderful things, Edith, and he might yet be made a fine man."

Edith's face was still white and her lips were set.

"Indeed, I trust he will," she said. "But

e neither loves me nor do I love him; but," she added, quickly, "please do not mention this matter to him, for he is coming here to morrow evening and I wish to see him."

Mrs. Grey was standing near, very much puzzled at Edith's manner, and still more so when she turned to her mother and said,

"Mother, dear, you may tell Mr. Haufmann all about it while I go upstairs."

And when she reached her room she sat for a long time in the chintz covered rocker listening to the far off, lonely song of a violin.

There were two very much puzzled people in the drawing room, but the mother's heart was light, for she knew, no matter how sorely Edith's pride had been hurt, that her heart had not received a serious wound; and Karl Haufmann, after hearing the whole story, and, knowing the ways of men, felt his righteous indignation rise to boiling heat. If Gerald Warren had been anywhere within reach a reformation might have been begun there and then.

We can only imagine Karl Haufmann's thoughts as he wended his way home under the bright moonlight. Nature threw her quiet mantle of stillness around him, forming a strange contrast to the stormy tumult of his soul.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MISTAKES DISCOVERED.

The evening of the next day came, and Edith, clad in a simple dress of the palest blue, awaited Gerald's arrival. Her golden air was rolled back in wonderful waves from her fair brow, and her eyes shone with unusual brilliance. She had not dressed to charm Gerald, but in her loveliest gown she could not have been half so charming. There is nothing so delightful and refreshing to the eye as a beautiful maiden wearing a simple dress.

She watched him walk up the path from the gate. His step was quick and nervous, and, as he came near her, she noticed the flush on his cheek and his bright, restless eyes. He had changed a little, she thought. There was something about his appearance that she had failed to notice before, or, perhaps, it had not been so easy to see.

She had first decided to entertain him on the verandah, but no; she wished to undo what she had done in the drawing-room, just where it had all happened. She did not blame Gerald more than herself. They had both been mistaken, that was all; but he must have

known from the first the true state of his heart, while she had but recently discovered hers.

She became indignant when she perceived what caused the flushed cheeks and the bright eyes. He bent over her to kiss her.

"Surely, after being away so long. No? Oh, well, later on!"

Edith was quick to notice, for some maidens would never have known he had been drinking.

Instead of the quickened heart-beat and the blushing cheek Edith felt a pang of pity and sorrow for the man whose bright life was so full of talent and rare possibilities, for he was steering his little craft against the hard, cruel rocks which afford excitement and laughter for a time, but in the end they rack the boat to pieces and leave only wreckage for the angry waves to play with at will.

"You received my note?" he was saying. "I was so sorry that I could not be on hand to give you a welcome back, but you know, circumstances sometimes force themselves upon one, and away the nice little plans go."

"Yes, I understand, Gerald."

"I am so glad to have you back again. It has been such a lonely summer without you," and he bent over to take her hands.

She allowed him to hold them for a moment and then said, earnestly,

"Gerald, why do you say that?"

He thought she was playing with him.

"Edith, you know it is the truth. Why, you are beautiful to-night, dear," he exclaimed as he attempted to put his arms around her.

She quickly drew herself away, and, standing proudly, with her dark eyes snapping fire, she said,

"Gerald, I am in earnest! Why did you ask me to marry you when you do not love me?"

Gerald was so surprised and astonished at this outburst that he was speechless for a moment, then the color seemed to die out of his face and his eyes lost their brilliance.

"Edith, what do you mean?" he asked, slowly. "Do you mean that you do not love me?"

A moment before it would have been easy to answer, but now that Gerald looked so changed it was hard indeed.

"Yes, Gerald," she said, very gently. "I mean that, and also that you do not love me."

"And why do you say that?"

"Because, if you really loved me you would not act in the way you have been doing."

"I will have to ask you to explain your
lf," he said, dryly.

It was getting very hard for Edith.

"Well, Gerald, if you do not know I am
fraid that I cannot explain."

"I am afraid, then, that I am at a loss to
now your meaning," he answered, coldly.

There was silence for a moment and then
Gerald sank into a big chair by the window
and covered his face with his hands.

Of course, he thought, Ronald has told the
whole business and now Edith knows every-
thing. There was no use defending himself,
that was sure. He would show her that he
was not wholly to blame for all the badness
in his nature.

"Edith," he said, in a low voice, "I know
you must despise me, but perhaps not as
much as I do myself My father was an
Italian gentleman by birth, and my mother an
actress. Anything good there may be in me
I thank my mother for, but—the rest—all the
rest—I inherit from my worthless father.
Bitter, bitter, is the fight against heredity.
He was one of the worst gamblers of his day.
He left my mother in poverty to spend the
last cent at the gaming table. This will help
you to understand why I have the passion
for gambling, but that does not excuse the
mean advantage I took——"

"But, Gerald," Edith interrupted, not understanding his last words, "I do not want you to think that this would make me cease to love you if my heart had really been given to you."

"Oh, do not say that, for you are only trying to spare me. No girl, after hearing what you have, could still love a man."

"No, I assure you, if I loved you, notwithstanding the little I have heard, I would still love you and try to make you better."

"Edith, you are an angel, but you do not know how sorely I was pressed for money when I did it."

He marvelled at her strange manner. How a girl could act in that way, knowing that her brother had been treated in the shameful way that Ronald had, by the man she had promised to marry, was more than he could understand. She must simply hate him.

Edith, not knowing anything about what Gerald was giving her credit for knowing, did not wish him to think that it was on account of his gambling that she had ceased to love him, but rather to let him know that she had never really loved him and that she was very sorry and very much to blame for ever saying she had.

"I am very sorry for you, Gerald," Edith answered. "And knowing what you inherit

you should be doubly careful; but what hurts me even more than the gambling is that you tamper with liquor. Oh, why do you meddle with it?"

Her sympathies were fully aroused for this bright life, slipping already into so many pit falls.

If she had only known what Gerald thought she knew how different would have been her words and actions!

Gerald had not improved through the summer, and his love—if the feeling he had for Edith could be called love—had not grown; he had not led the kind of life that would encourage the growth of love for a sweet, pure girl like Edith. Then Mrs. Grey's great loss of money had driven all thoughts of marriage with Edith out of his mind. He had simply intended to play his part well until Edith should find out for herself what Ronald had evidently told her, then he knew that she could love him no more and they would part. He had fully expected a stormy interview, but now the part Edith was playing puzzled him. It never dawned upon him that Edith might not know, for who else could have told her anything. That Karl Haufmann could be connected with it he never for a moment imagined. The restless spirit of his father

had taken hold of him and he was fast becoming a stranger to his better self.

Such is the way of the follies of this world. After we have travelled far down the glittering path, so brightly lighted for a while that the hard, cruel rocks under our feet are not noticed by us, the lights grow dim, and we feel the sharp edges wound us sorely. To keep on seems almost the only way; to return would be well nigh impossible, and yet, there is a way—an only way—and no matter how far down the path we have wandered this way of return is always open to us. We can regain our starting-place, but the marks of the wounds remain always with us.

Now that Edith was taking things so coolly, for evidently she did not look upon his conduct as unpardonable, he wished to leave the best impression he could on her mind.

"Edith," he answered, "please do not think that this is a customary thing with me. I only took a glass to-night as I was dining with some friends, and, of course, one has to do that sort of thing occasionally, you know."

"I do trust that it is only occasionally," she replied. "But, Gerald, I want to say how sorry I am that this has happened, and if we had both been less hasty it would not be necessary now. If I felt that you loved

me I would find it hard to say what I have said."

"We will not discuss that," he answered, assuming an injured air. "It would only make you sad to know that it hurts me more than words can tell. A man only loves once, Edith, and I have lost, but 'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.'"

His voice was low and there was an assumed earnest ring to it that was quite deceiving.

Neither of them noticed that Ronald had entered the house and now stood at the drawing-room door. His face was white with rage. He had heard Gerald's last words; and that Gerald Warren should dare to make love to his sister enraged him.

"Warren, what do you mean?" he exclaimed, in a voice trembling with suppressed anger.

Gerald turned with a start and faced him.

"How dare you come to this house and make love to my sister?" he thundered at him. "You low scoundrel!"

Then he stopped, realizing that he could say no more or Edith would know the whole secret. Gerald stood motionless, white to the lips. Now he knew that Edith had really known nothing at all, except perhaps a rumor.

What a fool he had been! He could have played his cards so much better.

Ronald and he looked at one another; but the look was not one of love.

"Warren, I would like to see you outside," Ronald said, in a thick voice.

Gerald breathed easier. Edith would not know after all. He faced Edith for a moment, then bowed very low, and walked proudly out of the room with the air of a prisoner in the hands of the enemy.

While this had been going on Edith stood perfectly still, wondering what it all meant. Surely Ronald must know something that she did not about Gerald. She was very sorry for Gerald. Perhaps Ronald was mistaken. How angrily he had spoken, and Gerald had taken it so nicely. He had not answered in rage, as some men would have done; but if he had been innocent would he not have become enraged at Ronald's words? She waited anxiously for Ronald's return. What did it all mean? How glad she was that her mother was out helping at the bazaar and would not be home until late. After waiting what seemed to her to be an endless time, Ronald came in, very white and worried looking. Before she had time to question him he walked straight over to her and said, in a hard voice,

"Now, Edith, tell me the truth. Did that man make love to you?"

"No, not to-night."

"Did he ever?"

"Ye . But, Ronald, what does all this mean?"

"Never mind, answer me. When did he make love to you?"

"Before I went away."

"And you?"

"I never loved him."

"Did you tell him that at the time?"

"Oh, Ronald, I will tell you all about it afterwards, but do tell me now, what is the matter with him?"

"Do you mean to say you were engaged to him?" Ronald questioned, sharply.

"Yes, all summer. I have just broken it off to-night."

"Oh, heavens! What a villain he is!" Ronald exclaimed as he sank into a chair.

"Tell me, Ronald, what is the matter?" Edith urged.

"Well, now, look here," he answered, "I never intended that either you or mother should know, and I will trust you to keep it to yourself. Never as long as you live let mother know. Promise me."

"All right, I will, but be quick and tell me,"

Edith said as she moved her chair nearer to Ronald's.

There was an expression of shame and sorrow on Ronald's face as he continued.

"I got into a scrape this summer, Edith, and that man has me in his power until I pay back."

"Oh, Ronald!" Edith exclaimed.

"Now, listen, and I will tell you how it happened and you will see what a brave man you have for a brother!" he said, with a sneer. "Shortly before you left, one night Warren asked me down to his club for dinner. I never told either you or mother at the time, but I went, and who was there but Roy Johnson. Well, when dinner was over—I won't go into details—but I knew before long that I should have been much better if I had stayed at home, they began to play a friendly game of cards. Rather than appear a prig I joined too. Soon they began to play for money. Roy always seemed to get the best of things, and they were all laughing and jolly, and when I rose to go they jollied me; and, confound it! there was Roy calling me a 'prig' because I couldn't have a game for the fun of it. What a villain that fellow is!" Ronald stood up in his excitement and began pacing the room. "Then," he continued, "I made the biggest fool of myself that ever

lved. I lost every time except the first. If I had only seen that it was all a rank trick to rope me in, and come home after the first game——"

"And you owe money, Ronald," Edith interrupted.

"Yes, but let me finish, Edith. I lost so heavily that night to Warren, and also some to Roy, that I went night after night to try and win it back, for I thought it was the only way. How could I ever pay it, for I could not tell mother? But, with few exceptions, I kept losing, until I quit with a big debt on my shoulders."

"And do you owe money to Roy?"

"No, thank God! I managed to pay him back this summer from my earnings; but however will I pay Warren?"

"Is it necessary? Can he make you?"

"I don't suppose he can, legally, you know, although I am not sure. He has threatened me with all sorts of things if I don't; the mean cur! You see, when I won he handed over the money, and I was to do likewise. He says that old man Warren is coming down on him hard; he has squandered so much of his money, and now he is head over heels in debt, and he has to have the money. Oh, heavens! what a rank fool I was!" and Ronald groaned aloud in agony.

"How long has he given you to pay it, Ronald?" Edith questioned.

"He says he will give me another six weeks."

"Well, this is what we will do. I despise the man, and hate handing him out money, but it is a debt of honor, and you have had your lesson. I will be of age next month and we will pay him off with part of my allowance, and you can pay me back some day and mother will never know."

"No, Edith, don't be foolish. I have my share and could use that only for the fear of mother finding out; and then, if there was any possible way for me to earn the money I'd rather than pay a debt of that kind with father's hard earned money. If I could only get somebody to lend me the amount and I could pay it back by degrees."

"Ronald, mother must never know, for it would worry her so," Edith said, thoughtfully.

"Well, isn't that just what I have been saying?" Ronald answered, sharply. "Go to bed, Edith, I want to think." He was clearly out of humor, and it was natural, wasn't it?

"Don't worry, Ronald. We will manage to pay it somehow but what I wonder at most is the daring boldness of the man to talk love

me. I wish I had known all this before he came to-night, and ''

''Yes,'' Ronald interrupted, ''there are far too many girls in the world who listen to love from any man.''

''Ronald,'' Edith began, then, thinking arguing would be useless, she seated herself at the piano and began to play softly.

''Go to bed, Ronald,'' she said, ''I want to think, besides I hear mother coming up the walk and you are in poor shape to greet her.''

Rising, she walked over to him and put her arms around his neck.

''Don't worry, brother, we have both earned our lesson, and we will be better for it. You will get the money some way for your debt. It will be easier fixing up your mistake than mine, I think.''

What she meant we can only surmise, but when Ronald reached his own room he did not wonder at Edith's remark, his mind was so filled with his own worries.

Edith lay awake long into the night, and her thoughts were not with Ronald or his troubles, nor of Gerald Warren and his sins. They were of an honest heart she had wounded and of a wonderful love she had lost. Ever and anon through the deep silence would come that eager question, ''Do you love another, Edith?''

Ah! if he would only ask it once again! But then he was so far away, so was the sun light, but in a little while it would be nearer, —so would Charlie.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CLIMBING THE PATH OF LOVE.

The days passed quickly. A little while and the autumn tints would be falling, painting the foliage golden and bright red. But the summer sun was still shining, the air was balmy, and the warm southern breezes frolicked amongst the trees.

Ronald became more and more worried as the time passed, and he failed to find the necessary money for his debt. He did not know that Edith had, unknown to her mother or him, secured some vocal pupils in a distant part of the city. If Edith had only discovered the amount of Ronald's debt, she would probably have never undertaken to help to raise the sum. But she worked cheerily on, thinking of the great surprise she had in store for Ronald.

In the evenings, when she sang the songs that had so entertained her Nova Scotia friends, her thoughts would wander far away. The early summer months would come back to her, and the memory of some hours that would never return. If she could only have her visit over again, she would make the sensitive strings of that loved violin sing

a song of joy and gladness instead of sorrow and despair. No, her visit was over, the time had passed, and she was too proud ever to invite a return. Instead of one lonely heart, there would be two; but he would never know it.

One morning Ronald appeared at breakfast looking so sad and worried that Mrs. Grey, noticing it, said, "What is the trouble, my son? I am afraid Dr. Craig is giving you too much to do. I will be glad when college opens again."

"No, mother, it's all your imagination, dear. I'm fine, never was better, but the work is a little hard; still, I like it. Don't you worry about me, mother. That's what makes wrinkles, you know, and you are always to look young. Not one of the boys I know has such a young looking mother."

It was with such bantering remarks Ronald succeeded in deceiving her. He was very busy all morning, and when lunch time came on this particular day, being very much worried and out of humor generally, he decided to go to the Windsor café, order something simple, and watch for Mr. Watson, an old friend of his mother's, a dear, kind old gentleman, well provided with worldly goods. He knew that he always took lunch there, and if it just happened that they were there at the

ame time he would ask him to lend him the money and explain the whole thing to him, much as he disliked the idea.

He entered the café, seated himself near the door, in order to watch those coming in, and ordered some toast and coffee, which was quite a piece of extravagance for him. He could have got three sandwiches at the lunch counter for the same amount. He had finished the toast, and still Mr. Watson did not come. He became nervous when the waiter hung around his table. Surely he would not have to tip the man!

There was Mr. Watson, taking a seat a few tables away; he would wait a moment before he approached him.

His eyes wandered to the door again.

A young man, or, we will not call him young—he certainly was not quite as young as Ronald, and still he was many miles away from being as old as Mr. Watson—entered, and was shown a seat at the table directly opposite to Ronald, and facing him.

Ronald looked at him. Who was it? Some one he had seen before.

Just then the young man looked up, caught Ronald's eye, and quickly looked at the menu card.

Surely he knew the man. Who could he be?

Ronald again looked up and the man was

staring at him. Confound it, who was the man anyway? No, surely not he. How could he be there? He looked again, the man was still staring at him with recognition in his eyes.

Ronald got up and walked over to him. As the man noticed him approach, a smile lighted up his face and he rose quickly, holding out his hand.

"Ronald," a familiar voice said, "I thought I knew you. How fortunate! I have been on the lookout for you."

"By jove, it's you, Charlie! Upon my word, I thought it was you from the first, but how in thunder did you get here?"

"Oh, just on business, Ronald. But how you have grown! Remember I have not seen you for some years."

"That's true, old man. But won't you come up to the house? They'll just be at lunch now and we will give them a surprise."

"Oh, no, no," Charlie said, with a forced calmness, "I couldn't possibly. I have a very urgent appointment in a short time; but you haven't had lunch yet, have you? Come, join me, do, and we can talk and eat together."

"Thank you, Charlie, thanks," muttered Ronald, trusting that Charlie had not noticed his table.

As the lunch disappeared, Ronald became quite talkative.

"Is this where you take lunch every day?" Charlie asked, after they had discussed old times anew.

"Why, no, you just bet I don't! Can't afford it, and if I could I wouldn't."

"I thought not, for I have been here for the last few days and haven't noticed you before."

"No; just came in to-day to see a friend," Ronald interrupted.

"I'm keeping you, then," Charlie ventured.

"No, old chap, in fact I hardly think I'll bother seeing him now. I believe he's gone anyway," he said as he glanced to where Mr. Watson had been seated.

"Nothing very important, I take it," Charlie remarked.

"No, and yes," replied Ronald. He had almost decided to tell Charlie his trouble.

Now Ronald knew nothing of Charlie's newly acquired wealth so no mercenary object can be attributed to him.

"Look here, Charlie," Ronald began, "perhaps you could give me a little advice about something that is troubling me, if you don't mind listening till I relate my latest calamity."

He tried to speak jestingly, but it was, in truth, no jesting matter, and he knew it.

Ronald proceeded to narrate, in a precise way, what the matter was. Charlie listened, deeply interested. After he had done, he asked,

"And who is this man, Ronald?"

"Why, that is the killing part," Ronald proceeded to explain. "I suppose you people knew—as Edith visited you all summer—that she was engaged, and to this man."

Charlie's face became ashen white, and the color even left his lips. But Ronald, failing to notice this, hurried on.

"We knew nothing about it until the other night, when it all came out."

Charlie controlled his voice with a great effort.

"She can't know what sort of a man he is."

"Why, yes," Ronald interrupted. "She knows and has broken it all off with him. Never loved him anyway, she says. That's the way with girls, they never know their own minds. But what is worrying me is——"

"Yes," broke in Charlie. "What did you say his name is?"

"Gerald Warren."

"And where is he now?"

"In Fredericton, with his foster-father."

"Oh," remarked Charlie, his face drawn and colorless. "I thought this man was in town."

"No, he went home last week," Ronald explained, sullenly. "And I just had a gentle reminder from him to-day."

"Will you give me his exact address?"

"Yes, but you're not going to make a fuss, or anything like that, I hope!"

"Oh, no; just simply to satisfy my curiosity," announced Charlie, adding, in a moment, "If you could give me Roy's number I would like to call on him. It is a great pity he's heading the wrong way."

"But, Charlie," Ronald suggested, "could you not come up for dinner to-night? Sorry to have burdened you with my trouble so soon, but do come up for dinner, can't you?"

"Thanks, but I couldn't."

"But you must," Ronald replied, earnestly. "Mother and Edith will be very angry with me for not bringing you."

"See, here, Ronald," Charlie interrupted, "I'll trust you to let neither your mother nor Edith know that I am in the city."

"But, why in thunder do——"

"Never mind, Ronald," Charlie interrupted, "I can hardly explain now, except that I am in such a rush."

"Now, look here, old man, what do you

think I am? You're only joking, aren't you? They would be so delighted to see you."

"No, I'm in real earnest, Ronald. Please don't let them know."

Ronald gave him a searching glance; then an idea flashed through his mind.

"Surely, Charlie, she didn't——"

"I guess I'll have to be going," Charlie interrupted quickly, all expression having gone out of his face. "Will I meet you here to-morrow at the same time?"

"Yes, but, Charlie," Ronald began, when the look in Charlie's eyes told him that if he had guessed aright the subject was too sacred to be spoken of.

They parted in front of the café, each knowing that the other knew—Ronald with a feeling of deep respect for Charlie, and Charlie having made up his mind that the following day would be his last in Montreal.

Since Edith had returned to her home a restless spirit had taken hold of him. He could not remain at home, even for a short time. Everything around the dear old place reminded him of her, and when the stars showed their bright lights in the sky, and the moon cast its radiance over the land, the shadows seemed to enter in his soul, and he could find no rest for his lonely heart. The stillness and sublime quietness of it all, filled

him with an unspeakable loneliness. He had to get away to the noisy city where the busy ways of the world would, for a time, divert his thoughts into other channels. He had gone to New York and endeavored to become interested in business, but before long he found that a lonely heart can still be lonely even in the crowded streets of a great city; that it is not altogether the silent stars, or the peaceful, silvery moonbeams that bring loneliness to us, but just the lonely heart itself that will not be comforted.

In Montreal he found that loneliness was still his companion, and a comrade hard to dismiss.

He was angry with himself for allowing Ronald even a hint of the true situation of things. He might have accepted Ronald's invitation, and yet he felt that to see Edith again would be more than he could bear. And, more than that, his proud, sensitive nature rebelled at the idea of allowing her to see, by the marks of sorrow on his face, that he had suffered.

After parting with Ronald he at once made his way to his hotel, made out a cheque for one thousand dollars, payable to Gerald Warren at Fredericton, and enclosed it in a note asking that the receipt be sent to Ronald Grey

and the amount be taken as payment for the debt owing him.

He decided to go home the following evening and thus escape any thanks from Ronald; perhaps he would never know who had paid the debt.

Needless to say, in due time Ronald found out who had paid the debt; but it is not to be recorded here just how grateful he was, nor how he expressed his gratitude, nor how for some years Ronald's savings went to pay off this loan, as he termed it, much as Charlie rebelled at the idea.

CHAPTER XXX.

LOVE'S SUMMIT.

The following evening found Charlie in a very uncertain frame of mind. The train on which he had secured his berth was due to leave shortly after seven o'clock. His grip and suit-case were packed, waiting to be taken to the depot. He was standing by the open window, apparently watching the busy crowd hurrying here and there on the street below, but in reality he saw none of it. His thoughts were where his heart was.

The door opened and a sharp voice said,

"Baggage ready, sir? Your train leaves in twenty minutes. The bus is at the door, sir."

"Never mind that stuff," Charlie answered, quickly, without turning around, "I'm staying here to-night."

"All right, sir." And Charlie was alone again.

He remained standing by the window until a few early twilight shadows entered the room. Only a little part of the sky could be seen. The high buildings hid from view the setting sun, sinking in all its glorious splendor, and giving promise of a bright new day.

After a time Charlie picked up his hat in

rather an absent minded fashion and left the hotel.

Let us follow him.

He had never been at the Greys' house, and had firmly decided not to go, having again refused a pressing invitation from Ronald that day when they met at lunch. He did not know that in a clumsy manner Ronald had given away the secret of his being in town; nor did he know of the strange way in which Edith's heart began to beat when she heard this news. If he had known this, and the meaning of it, he probably would have quickened his steps. It was quite a long walk, but in time he turned down the street which led to "Rosemond," the home of Mrs. Grey. He had left the centre of the city and was now in the suburbs, away up near the mountain. The house was at the extreme end of the street; in fact, the street stopped some little distance from the entrance to the grounds, but there was a well-beaten path.

The overwhelming desire to see where Edith lived had proved too much for him, and for that reason he had delayed his departure. He decided just to walk quickly past, and as the house stood far in from the road, almost hidden from view by massive old oaks in front and at one side, he would not be seen. He could only catch a glimpse of the dear old

some he had heard Edith mention so lovingly.

At the far side of the grounds and almost hidden by the trees was a little path, leading somewhere. Charlie did not know where, but from all appearances it seemed to be outside of the grounds. The shadows were deepening and perhaps a better view of the house could be had if he followed this path a little way. He was ignorant of the fact that the grounds took a sudden curve here, and the path only led to the gate, leading through the thick hedge into the grounds just at the side of the little summer-house.

The house was gaily lighted, and the strains of music were wafted to him on the evening breeze. Hope had died in Charlie's heart when he learned that Edith loved another. The fact that this other one was worthless, was unworthy, and that the promise had been broken, failed to give him even a ray of hope, for he was sure that Edith, even if she had discovered before it was too late that she had not loved her unworthy lover, could never love him.

He leaned against the little green gate, and his heart was filled with an almost uncontrollable desire to see Edith once more at any cost. Yet he stood silent, fighting a fierce

battle with himself. This seemed the bitterest moment in his life.

The silvery moon shed her soft light around him as if in sympathy, but it was fortunate that his head was bent, for even the bright, beautiful moon would have paled at the sight of his anguished face.

He had failed to notice a white-clad figure leave the house and make its way across the lawn. Every moment or two the soft light of the moon would fall full upon her, and if he had only looked up his eyes would have beheld the "lady of his dreams."

But the ways of the world are ever thus: we are so intent on our own worries and troubles that we often fail to see that right in front of us is the one thing that would make our hearts glad if we could but dispel our gloomy vision for a moment and with clear sight look around us.

Karl Haufmann was spending the evening with them, as he so often did, and Edith, after a time, slipped out into the garden to wander in the moonlight for a few moments. Her thoughts were full of the news Ronald had told them.

Charlie's love for her was like the moonlight. She loved to dream of it; it seemed to brighten all her thoughts with its wonderful splendor. To-night ner heart was very

sad, for she knew that the years would hold no love music for her. She had but the memory; and in the deep stillness around her, in fancy, she heard again the low, intense strains of a violin burdened with a great love, but full of sadness, and breathing the sufferings of a lonely heart. In fancy, she thought herself the player, and the stars and the silvery moon alone the hearers.

She stood beside the summer-house, her face uplifted to the beautiful moon—the moon that knew both her secret and his.

Charlie looked. 'Twas surely a wonderful vision, for how could Edith be there? How had she come unnoticed to him?

In a moment she turne her head. She felt herself tremble. Could the figure at the gate be Charlie? But the moon was shining its brightest, making it impossible for her to be mistaken. She waited in breathless silence.

How long had he been there, and would he come in?

Noiselessly the gate opened, and Charlie approached her with something almost like reverence in the movement. He stood a short distance from her. She knew he would not come any nearer. She slowly moved towards him.

"Charlie," she murmured, very low, so

low that the moon had to bend a little nearer to be able to hear.

"Why did you come?" Charlie hardly knew what he said.

She was close to him, looking up into his face.

He felt a sharp pain in his heart. Would Edith play with him? Surely not!

"Are you sorry I came?" she questioned, with a little tremble in her voice.

It was more than he could bear that she should play with him when she must know of the longing in his heart.

How beautiful she was with the moonlight falling on her upturned face! The temptation to take her in his arms was almost irresistible—just for a moment, but no,—he turned quickly and walked towards the gate.

Edith stood wondering and bewildered.

When he reached the gate he turned. Edith was beside him, her small, white hand stretched out as if to detain him.

"Edith! Edith!" and his voice was full of suffering. "Why do you do this when you know my heart is almost breaking with its love for you. Time only makes the wound more impossible to heal, and my lonely heart can find no rest or comfort. Oh, Edith! knowing all this, how can you be so cruel?"

"Charlie," a soft voice answered, dangerously near, "I would not be cruel, but kind,——"

He eagerly seized her hands and looked into those beautiful, lustrous eyes.

"Edith, tell me once again that you do not love me and then I will know that 'twas not the fancy of a clouded brain."

"I cannot tell you that," a sweet voice said, very low.

"Edith!" Charlie exclaimed as he lifted the sweet face to his, "but, oh! it cannot be that you could love me! Tell me, oh, my darling, tell me!"

The moon hid her face behind a cloud, and a lark winged its way steadily up into the heavens, while a soft, white arm stole gently up until it reached his neck, and there rested.

"Whisper that you love me, darling," a low voice murmured in her ear, and the answer that he got was meant for him alone—'twas too low for even the moon to hear.

The moments passed. There was silent music in each heart and one melody. The anguish and the suffering and the loneliness had passed, the wound was healed, for two hearts were bound in love—a love as true and beautiful as love could be; a love that all along the pathway would keep their hearts in

perfect peace and trust, and the sunshine and the shadow would mingle into one; for love—

"The sweetest and the best;
The love that God Himself doth plant,
Within each human breast,
Would remain forever with them."

CHAPTER XXXI.

TRUE LOVE.

Away, far off in a peaceful orchard down by the deep blue sea, as the sun was sinking low, painting the sky with such glorious hues and delicate tints that even the artist's eye could ask no more, the little mother and William McCullugh stood silently watching the sunset. Her small, white hand was resting on his arm and in her sweet, gentle eyes a tender light shone. He bent down and put his arm around her and his voice was very low.

"Mother, it's fine to have you here, so well and strong."

"Yes, and it's fine to be here, William," the sweet voice answered.

Then he drew her a little closer to him and neither spoke again for awhile. The sun was sinking lower and lower, the flaming red of the distant sky grew deeper and deeper until it became scarlet and deep purple, and just below the purple, and very quietly, the shadows began to fall and silently to creep over the land.

"Elsie!" He spoke the name of her youth and a picture came before her of the last time

he had called her thus, when life seemed closely ebbing away from her and the love of years grew so strong and the dreaded parting full of pain. She lifted her eyes to his.

"Yes, William."

"God has been good to us, wife," William McCullugh said, thoughtfully.

"Yes, wonderfully kind, William," and the sweet lips began to tremble.

"Perhaps," he gently continued, "He may allow us to view the sunset of life together, Elsie. All the years together, side by side. Sometimes, dear wife, the road has been rough for you——"

"Ah, William, don't," the little mother cried, "don't, dear, it has never been too rough, but sometimes, dear husband, it might have been if you had not been near to hold my hand."

He turned his head away so that she might not see the tear in his eye.

"Ah, but, wife," he said, "it has always been a wonderful thing to me that you could leave everything and come and live with me, for I am such an ordinary man, very ordinary, indeed, dear wife."

"Hush, William," the little mother smiled as she took both of his large, rough hands in her small, shapely ones and looked up at him with the great love of years shining in her

eyes. "Life has been far more beautiful, dear, far more lovely, spending it thus with you than it would ever have been for me spent in any other way and in any other surroundings. No, William, where love such as ours is the rough places are made smooth, the darkness is turned into light, and pain and suffering is forgotten."

"Elsie, dear wife and mother," the big man whispered, "God never made a braver, purer, sweeter little woman than you, and how I ever came to have you for my own will always remain a mystery to me."

"It was your big heart and beautiful soul, dear William," the little mother said as she smiled up at him.

He led her gently through the orchard, up the winding path that led into the rose garden, but the roses have gone long since, and the autumn tints had already covered the leaves.

"We will be lonely when Winnie leaves us, William," the little mother said, with a touch of sadness in her voice.

"Aye, we will, wife. Will it be harder for you, little woman?" the big man asked.

"No, dear, but the house will be so lonely without her, and now that the time is drawing so near I don't like to think of it."

"But she will be near us, wife. Picton is not far away, and she can come home often."

"Yes, William, but 'twill not be the same."

"No, 'twill not be the same; I am thinking that, too," he answered, and continued: "We will have to be leaving the farm, little woman, when Charlie goes, but I am thinking that Charlie is not of the marrying kind. I thought this summer that perhaps Edith and he might——"

"William," the little mother interrupted, quickly, "that can never be, I am afraid. She was engaged to be married when she came here."

"Ah, well, now that's strange. I thought she gave Charlie a good many smiles to be thinking of another man," said honest William.

"No, hush!" said his gentle wife. "You are mistaken, William, but I am afraid that Charlie's heart will be sore for many years."

"Tut, tut, wife; Charlie's not so foolish. There are many maids——"

"Now, William, you don't mean that, for you know how sad you would have been if I had not said yes," the little mother answered with a ring of old-time gaiety in her voice.

"Yes, wife, that's very true, and I guess Charlie feels pretty deeply."

"He has loved her ever since she was a little girl," the mother said.

"I thought so. Ah, I was afraid so," assented William, sadly. "I wonder what he is doing staying away so long. I need him here," he added.

"Well, he will be here the end of the week and will tell us all about his trip," the little mother answered.

"Girls cause a great deal of trouble any way with their pretty faces and frivolous ways," William McCullugh complained.

"Ah, William, man, I don't like to hear you talk like that," said his wife.

"No, but, Elsie, dear, there are none like you; if there were I would not complain."

"Well, come, William, into the house, the air is damp. You cannot expect every person to love the right one, can you? The ways of the heart are often altogether past finding out, are they not, dear? We will not worry; God has been very good to us, and He never sends a burden too heavy to bear."

But even while she spoke so cheerfully her heart ached for her boy away off in the lonely city, with only a lonely heart for company. She knew that each day after Edith had left had only added to the loneliness and loss, and she knew that it would be always thus, and as she thought of the dreary winter

ahead and of the utter loneliness and silent suffering of the heart of her boy, the "little mother" longed to comfort him.

She did not know that away off in the lonely city the lonely heart of her boy could never be lonely again. That sorrow and sadness for him had passed away, and the wound in his heart had been healed. He had won the desire of his heart, "the lady of his dreams," the "only love of his life." She had given her heart to him. She had said that she loved him. The darkness and the night had passed and now the world was covered with a new, soft light.

If the little mother could have known all that, how happy, how light-hearted she would have been. All through the night her thoughts were with her boy, and her heart was full to overflowing with love for him, but, as the morning awoke, as a bright, beautiful, new day dawned, the burden of her heart was lifted, for in a mysterious way, by some unseen influence, she knew that all was well with her boy, that his night of sorrow had passed, and that the pain in his heart was gone.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LOVE'S DREAM REALIZED.

When Charlie came home all the weary restlessness had left him. He was now so light-hearted and gay that life seemed something very good and pleasant. The little mother felt so glad and thankful that Charlie's future was to be blessed by the love of the "lady of his dreams," for she knew so well the power of love in a life, how it can cause the sun to shine even through the darkest cloud. She knew what love had meant to her in her life, and she knew what it would mean to Charlie, and how desolate his life would have been without it, for in disposition he was very much like his gentle mother. A depressed, lonely spirit can cast gloom over many hearts, but what a bright, happy influence is shed from a cheerful, contented soul.

So much of the little mother's time was taken up in preparations for Winnie's wedding, which was to take place before the "snows of winter fell."

Dr. Clyde Bourne hastened on the wedding for he wanted sweet Winnie to be near him during the winter months in New York, as

he intended taking a special "six months' course" in the New York Hospital.

The hours flew, the days followed suit, and the weeks did not linger.

Winnie was all happiness, sadness and excitement. Happy because the path of "wonderful womanhood" lay before her. Love's dream was to be realized. Life for ever after was to be spent with him, the "knight of her heart." Life was to be blessed by his love and guarded and sheltered by his care and tenderness, but with all the wonderful happiness a little sadness would intermingle. The thought of leaving her "gentle mother," who was so frail even yet, and who needed so much care and kindness, but since Edith had promised to become one of the family Winnie felt more contented, for if Edith and Charlie would get married in the "Spring" all would be well, for she knew that Edith would love to live with the little mother for awhile and take a daughter's place.

Many letters were interchanged between the girls, for Winnie was so anxious that Edith should come for the wedding, but Edith could not think of leaving home so soon again and, besides, she was busy, too. And if Fate was kind it would not be very long before they would both be living in the same province, and not far from each other.

And so life goes on; from infancy, when the world is all one big blur of light and nothing much matters if only the little baby wants are kept satisfied, to childhood, when all the world is one "fairyland," all work is play, and there is no sadness at all. Then to young youth, when we catch a glimpse or two of the great, great world and we wonder, but are never afraid, for youth has no limit to its aims or desires and nothing daunts us or depresses. Then to young manhood and womanhood, when here and there we catch a glimpse of the goal ahead, and even in the mist we struggle on, striving to win, striving to reach the top rung of the ladder of success. It is in young manhood and young womanhood that so many wonderful things in our lives happen to us.

It is then that we view the world with clear, steady eyes and love the wonderful and strive after the mighty. It is then that the heart discovers the loved one and a life's influence is begun. But slowly the ebbing tide carries us on to middle age, when we look back on the beauties and triumphs and sometimes we think of what might have been, but only sometimes, for our lives are full of responsibilities and duties and we are slowly beginning to learn that the best things in life are not the glistening pleasures nor the tin-

seled joys, nor yet the high and mighty seat; but just love, and peace, and kindly deeds, and charity; and old age finds us with all our earthly life behind but still nearer the goal, the shining goal, where only great souls and kindly hearts can hope to enter. The hopes, the ambitions, the struggles, the pleasures and pain are left behind and only one star remains, the star of "peace."

When nature had robbed the trees of nearly all their leaves and had strewn them upon the cold earth, but yet before the snow had fallen to hide them, when the sunshine was bright and the moonlight nights so clear, Winnie and Clyde Bourne were wed. It was a very quiet, simple wedding, with only their "loved ones" and a few very dear friends, but joy and happiness filled the house and reigned in their hearts. As for the bride's trousseau nothing like it had ever been seen in that part before.

The "little mother" took from an old oaken chest, fragrant with the sweet odor of lavender, much old lace of wonderful value, and her jewels. She had kept them secret all these years, so that when the time came that Winnie or Flossie should leave her home for "true love's sake" they should take with them some precious treasures. She had lain them aside when she had left all for love, but

now she felt almost a girl again and memories sweet and sad, and strange, filled her heart; but with it all there was not even a shadow of regret for the riches, the pleasure and the gaiety of the life she might have led, but it would have been empty. Now her life was full. Full of love and kindness, of freedom and beauty. Love and kindness and beauty that money cannot buy, that is above price, that only comes to a happy, contented heart. The jewels had been her mother's and were very rare and costly, and modest Winnie felt that they were too rare and precious for her, but it was the "little mother's" wish, and the giving of them, and the thought of having them to give, gave her so much pleasure, that Winnie took them almost as a sacred trust and they "would be her treasures."

After the wedding the house felt very empty indeed and the "little mother's" heart sometimes was lonely, for Flossie was again at school and only Mr. McCullugh and Charlie were home. Yet through the cold winter months, although there were many lonely hours, still there were many sweet, quiet ones by the open fire-place, for with her was the husband of her heart and her firstborn and only son. They were so kind, so tender, and

considerate, that even the longest days had many bright hours in them.

So slowly the winter crept, and when gladsome spring ushered in once more, and as she waved a bright farewell to old, hoary winter and his midnight frosts, another wedding took place. Rosemond was a scene of beauty on that day. The old stone house was gaily lighted and joy abounded. The many guests filled the house with laughter and song. The bride was sweet beyond words, and to Charlie she was—

"Lovelier than the roses,
Purer than the snow,
His, until life closes,
His forevermore."

Ronald was best man, but he was lacking in his usual humor and gaiety, for since Edith's engagement he had begun to realize how much they would miss her. It would be more than lonely for the dear mother and himself. How could they get along without her? He had so often of late asked himself that question, but no answer ever came, and at the wedding, when everything was gay and all went merrily, his heart was sad; and Mrs. Grey, what would she do without the daughter who had been her almost constant com-

panion since a child, and who had been such a comfort to her by her bright spirit and loving heart when life was so lonely for her, when she had lost her best "loved one," and the world for awhile seemed such a dreary place? Yes, it was indeed hard to part with her even to Charlie, although there was no one to whom she would have more willingly given her than to Charles McCullugh, but Mrs. Grey, even if her heart was lonely and sad, outwardly appeared gay and happy.

Karl Haufmann whispered to her when for a moment she seemed free from welcoming the eager guests,

"Ah, my dear friend," he said, "I have been waiting to speak to you. Look! See how perfectly happy Edith is, just a vision of loveliness; and Charlie, he is a fine fellow and will make her very happy I know. Ah! my friend, think what love means in a life. You know what it is to have it; I know what the loss of it means. She is happier thus. Cheer up."

She smiled at him and said, "My friend, I thought I was looking very happy. Do I look sad?"

"No, no," he hastened to answer. "Only I know what your heart is saying and I know how we will miss her, but love is the finest thing in the world, and she was meant for it.

Lucky is the man to whom she has given her heart."

"Oh, well," she answered, bravely, "I am thankful for my dear boy, and so many kind friends, and love is not love unless it is unselfish, is it?"

She was then hurried off to greet more guests, and Karl Haufmann was left looking again at the merry, happy scene around him. Edith is pure white, fair as a lily, with roses in her cheeks, and Charlie, manly, fine and strong in the knowledge of the great love that God had given to him and the precious life that was his to guard and shield for his own until death do them part.

When the parting time came Karl Haufmann, as he kissed the fair, blushing bride so tenderly, whispered in her ear,

"Edith, my dear girl, you have chosen the wisest part. Fame and glory pass away, they soon fade as does the morning-glory in the hot noonday, but love is eternal, the only thing in the world that can make us forget ourselves and live for others. Edith, your life will be full of love and perfect happiness I know."

"Thank you, dear teacher," the sweet bride said, "but I will be lonely for everyone and for you. Remember your promise to visit us

soon. I shall not forget it and will look for you."

A beautiful smile lit up the face of Karl Haufmann as he replied, softly,

"Yes, Edith, I am counting on it," and in his heart he thanked kind "Fate" for sending him such true friends to brighten the lonely years.

Then in a little while the time came when the house was still, the guests had departed, and the fire smouldered and died in the grate. The lights were low, but the moon shone bright in the heavens and the sky was filled with stars. Ronald and his mother went out into the moonlight and walked under the stars. His arm was around her and her hand rested in his, while neither spoke to break the silvery silence, but each silently comforted the other, and the angel of "Love" was near them.

Meanwhile Edith and Charlie sped on their honeymoon to the distant continent filled with the glory of a wonderful new life to be spent with one another.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

HOME AGAIN.

Home again!

Over the land and over the sea, viewing the many sights and wonderous things, but after the travel, after the strange places, home again, where loving hearts are waiting to welcome and bless, and where the old home stands serene in all its peacefulness, where the twilight's crimson glory the fair scene in beauties clothe, and where Nature all around us fills our hearts with sweet repose.

Down by the beautiful sea, to the old home that was waiting for them, to the glad hearts eager to welcome, Edith and Charlie came after their wedding trip was over, after they had travelled in strange lands. To the home where he had waited, waited oft in grief and pain for the shadows to be lifted, for the sun to shine again.

But though many be the dark clouds that come o'er us large and small, there are always many bright stars shining through to cheer us all; and for all the pain and sorrow, all the suffering and the woe, there is much that's bright and gladsome though we may not see it so; but 'tis there and only waiting

till we chase the gloom away; till we look beyond the shadows to the happy, joyous days. To the days when care and sadness will have fled and left sweet peace, content and gladness in its stead.

The years that would have known but sorrow, grief and pain were now to be filled with love, and all that it carries in its train. For the joy outweighs the sorrow and the sun will shine to-morrow and forevermore.

THE END.